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VINDICATION

OF

RUSSIA AND THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS.

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1844.

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VINDICATION

OF

RUSSIA

AND

THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS.

By DAVID K. HITCHCOCK,

AUTHOR OF FAMILIAR OBSERVATIONS ON THE PRESERVATION OF THE TEETH.

BOSTON:

SAXTON, PEIRCE, AND COMPANY.

1844.

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PREFACE.

TO

HER IMPERIAL HIGHNESS,

MARIA NICOLAIEVNA,

THE GRAND DUCHESS OF LEICHTENBERG,

WHOSE

PROUD DISTINCTION IT IS TO BE ALIKE ENNOBLED BY
THE QUALITIES OF HER HEART AND MIND,
AND BY HER HIGH BIRTH,

THIS VOLUME,

IN ADMIRATION OF HER CHARACTER,

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY

DEDICATED.

DEDICATED

TO HIS EXCELLENCY

THE MARQUIS CORNWALLIS, K.G.

&c. &c. &c.

AS A TESTIMONY OF THE ESTEEM AND VENERATION

WITH WHICH

HE HAS INSPIRED

THE AUTHOR

OF

THE FOLLOWING SHEETS.

PREFACE.

We would ask the unbiased attention of the reader to the examination of the following pages. We say *unbiased*, because we think it necessary, in order to judge fairly of their merits, that the mind should be divested of the strong and bitter prejudices which have been created against Russia. We do not blame any one for forming such opinions; indeed, we do not see how it could have been otherwise. Our country has been flooded with books, pamphlets, and tracts, containing false statements respecting the policy and acts of the Russian government; and what has been still more effectual, we have had hosts of lecturers, who, for years, have been canvassing almost every town and village, calumniating Russia and vilifying the Emperor Nicholas. These lecturers, with hardly an exception, have been, and are, natives of Poland, who well know, when speaking to an audience, that, however absurd their statements, and enor-

mous their falsehoods, may be, it has not been in the power of any one to contradict or refute them.

It is strange, indeed, that there has never appeared a single line, or lecturer, in behalf of Russia and its abused but excellent monarch; and this work (in the preparation of which we have been assisted by a literary friend) is designed to throw some light upon the subject, — well convinced that our countrymen will never consent to have any one "condemned unheard;" therefore, it is believed that it will be efficacious in enlightening the minds of the people, and in dissipating those prejudices which have for years existed.

COURT STREET, *Sept.* 25, 1844.

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VINDICATION

OF

RUSSIA AND THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

"READ me any thing but history," said a distinguished statesman; "for that I know to be false." There was some ground for his sarcasm; but we should be disposed to qualify it, and read thus: "Let us read any thing but a book of travels; for that we know to be worse than false, a perversion of truth; and nothing, rather than a book of travels written by an English *man*. An English woman does better.

Few travellers ever render strict justice, even according to their capacities, to a foreign country or people; — seldom when there is a difference of religion; and never, if there is any ground of rivalry between that country and their own.

There is, naturally, a greater inclination to lie than to speak the truth, when any selfish purpose or feeling is to be served. A lie finds easier and readier belief when spoken of a foreign or hostile people; and in proportion to their distance and lack of intercourse is the chance of detection or contradiction.

We do not mean to be understood that all men are liars; but merely that a disposition to lie is inherent in mankind. Men lie without knowing it; they see through the stained glass of interest, of vanity, of passion, and receive as truth what their exaggerated lenses present.

It is natural to think well, first, of ourselves, individually; next, of those we love; and, lastly, of that society of which we are the integrants. According to these standards we are prone to judge all men and things; and as what we see abroad agrees with, or varies from, that standard, it receives our approbation or incurs our censure. A disappointment, or a flogging, gives us a mental and intellectual jaundice.

The Reverend Mr. Fiddler, of the High Church of England, came to this country to teach us natives Sanscrit, or, as he calls it, *Hanscrit.* As the Sanscrit literature is of little importance to a people who win their daily bread by their daily labor, and as there is scarcely the shadow of a shade of a chance that any native of the United States will ever have occasion, or opportunity, to exchange salutations with a priest of Bramah, he found no pupils; and, in his disappointment, wrote that we had not a scholar among us. If he had found no Episcopal form of worship, he would have set us all down as heathen.

A German traveller usually writes on given premises as he would on a problem in metaphysics or mathematics, and reasons as fairly as he does phlegmatically. The danger with him is, that he is sometimes mistaken in his premises.

Provided his national vanity is not offended, and *pourvu qu'il s'amuse*, a Frenchman is ever a good-natured traveller. We do not expect him to do

full justice to his neighbor, John Bull. The rivalry, and consequent prejudices, of eight hundred years, are not to be extinguished in one generation. We do not expect him to like us; for we are not a fiddling, a dancing, or a dressing people, and we care very little for *la gloire* and the *spectacle*. But our aborigines are exceedingly courteous and polite; they dance, and he makes himself at home among them at once, and speaks of them accordingly. There is little malice in your travelled Frenchman; if he is not a rigid votary of truth, it is not that he loves truth less, but that he loves romance, sentiment, and, above all, effect, more. He would prefer fact to fiction, if it produced as striking a sensation.

Of all travellers, John Bull is the least fair, as of all men he is the most disagreeable. The Frenchman is vain, the Yankee boastful; but the Englishman is both — and arrogant, and intolerant, and, what is worse, ill-natured, into the bargain. He may, possibly, praise the Pitcairn's islanders; for between Pitcairn's and the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent island, there can be no possible comparison: he will, assuredly, praise the kingdoms of Loggun and Bornou, in the centre of Africa; for *he* has discovered them; but of any Christian sovereign power he speaks with a reservation of his national dignity, and a proviso that God comes first, then the angels, the English people next, and all other divisions of the human race afterwards. Not a generous or noble act can he report, without remembering that some Englishman has done a nobler and more generous one; not a region can he behold that bears any comparison with some little spot in his native land; not a custom can he notice, without remarking that it

is otherwise, and better, at home. Thus John Bull boasts of the victory of Waterloo, while all Europe laughs at him; and he accounts for the ill success of his frigate fights, in his last war with us, by assuming that our ships are manned with English seamen. He reproaches us that we have not yet produced a Shakspeare during the half century of our national existence; just as if Shakspeare did not belong as much to us as to him; and as if such men as Shakspeare and Bonaparte were the productions of months, not of centuries. He finds fault with us for using steel instead of silver forks, and for mixing eggs in a cup instead of eating them from the shell. It never comes into his Bœotian head that eating eggs from the shell is a hazardous, filthy practice, and that steel forks are better than silver; no, for silver is the fashion of England. Just so, he condemns the despotic institutions and the serfdom of Russia; forgetting that the civilization of Russia is little more than a century old; that his own Saxon ancestors were, probably, born thralls, or villeins, and that the last of the English Henrys was as bloody and arbitrary a despot as Muley Ismael of Morocco, or any royal cut-throat that ever lived. And it happens, unluckily, that we Yankees, we freemen, — we, the most enlightened and most intelligent of all people past, present, and to come, get all our notions of men and things abroad from English writers; that is, from the worst possible authorities; from men who see a rival, if not an enemy, in every stranger; who skurry through a country with all the speed of steam and horse power, — as Sheridan descended to the bottom of a coal-pit, — to have it to say that they have been there; and, in many cases, without knowing enough of its language to ask for food

when they are hungry. Such, we say, are our sources of information; for there are few of us, comparatively speaking, who can speak or read any other language than their mother tongue. Europeans are better off: the majority of them, the English excepted, can speak more than one language.

The sculptor moulded the man conquering the lion: if the lion could have chiseled the marble, it would not have recorded an impossibility; it would have told the truth; the stone would have recorded the defeat of the man. Now, if Englishmen would content themselves with misrepresenting us, and condemning our thinkings and doings, it is little we should care; for we can understand what they write, and set them right when they go astray; but when they tell us of a distant and unknown land, — such, for example, as Russia, — when we reflect that its inhabitants are unable to defend themselves, inasmuch as not one in a million of them knows that any thing has been said of him or his, or could understand it if he did, — we are bound, in conscience, to consider that there are two sides to every story, and that those who have slandered America and Americans are capable of calumniating Russia and the Russians as well, or, rather, as ill.

"Of all the states in the world," says the very lively, very candid, and very agreeable, if not very profound, author of "Letters from the Baltic," (a lady,) Russia is, at this time, most particularly that which requires the application of principles grounded equally on the studious knowledge of the past, and a lucid judgment of the future, to render that wholeness and impartiality of opinion which may be comprehensible to others and just to her. Those

who would fairly judge Russia must first strip themselves of those habits of thought which, whatever their seeming, are only coincident with the age to which they have the accident to belong, and go back to those raw, but stable elements, which are the sole groundwork for a nation's prosperity, and which, in the present turmoil of hasty and changing opinions, have little chance of being comprehended and appreciated, save by some old-fashioned representative of an old-fashioned country, who considers the *a*, *b*, *c*, of loyalty and obedience the sole basis of any safe knowledge, and of any solid civilization.

"The two species of writers who have hitherto made Russia the subject of their pens, are either the mere tourist, — who sees and judges as the passing traveller, — or those whom public office or private connection has thrown into the highest circles of the capital, and are thus placed where they may, it is true, analyze the froth, but are far from reaching the substance, of the nation. No one has hitherto attempted the *philosophy* of this country, than which no subject, to reflecting and generalizing minds, can be more interesting; while those dissertations on its political aspect, which have appeared in our periodicals, are so colored with obvious partiality or with obvious invective, as rather to deter the reader from forming any distinct opinion, than to give him any premises whereon to rest.

"Russia has only two ranks — the highest and the lowest; consequently, it exhibits all those rudenesses of social life which must be attendant on these two extreme positions of power and dependence. It is in vain, therefore, to look for those qualities which equally restrain the one and protect the other, and which alone take root in that

half-way class called forth in the progress of nations equally for the interest of both. For in this light it is impossible to view the scanty and broken-linked portion of Russian society, which a sanguine and too hasty policy has forced, not nourished, into existence, and which, at present, rather acts as the depression, and not the foundation, of that most important body denominated the middle ranks of a nation. To study the real destinies of Russia, the philosopher of mankind must descend to a class still in bondage, and not yet ripe for freedom, but where the elements of political stability and commercial energy are already glaringly apparent."

What have we learned from all the travellers who have employed their pens on the subject of Russia and Poland? Sketches of manners, which may be faithful, or not; descriptions of sights and places, and pictures of towns and scenes; but nothing that, unless by inference, gives us an insight into the character of the people and the government of Russia, or its operations; — not the nature of the bondage in which a great class of that people are held, or its comparative magnitude and importance; — not even the important fact that above meets our eye for the first time, that there is no middle class in Russia. The lady, too, we believe, is the first who has hinted that the civilization of Russia, defective and imperfect as it is, is the forced creation of a "sanguine and too hasty policy." They, the writers above mentioned, have given us the naked outline of history; a dry chronology of events, without any of the filling, without any of the causes, without any of the springs of action, that have moved to or in the course of such events. As well might a person who never saw or heard of a horse form an idea of the struc-

ture and qualities of the animal from its naked skeleton, as we of the actual condition of Russia, or Poland, from any data yet given to the English and American public.

We read of the exploits and patriotism of Coriolanus with admiration; and, but for his subsequent defection and treason, should unhesitatingly set him down as one of Rome's worthiest. Setting aside that treason, was Caius Marcius Coriolanus a patriot? Did he fight and conquer for his country? Did he love his country at all? No; he loved his own order, the few aristocrats who kept the mass of their countrymen in a bondage more galling than that of the Russian serf; who scorned their just claims, and would have trampled them into yet more servile abjection. He was, excepting his personal virtues, valor, and military talent, the very *beau idéal* of an aristocrat; a man who would rather deprive others of their real rights than yield a tittle of his own fancied ones; who, the moment he felt his pride wounded and his consequence lessened, would have sacrificed even his own order, who did all they could to defend him, on the altar of his selfish revenge. He would have laid Rome in ashes rather than be the mere equal of Romans. His was the very spirit of Satan in Pandemonium, when he exclaimed, —

> **"Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven —**
> **Evil, be thou my good!"**

Yet this man has been held up as a hero and a patriot, by such writers and orators as judge from outside appearances, like the base monarch who hugged his chains because they were of gold.

Cato plunged the dagger into his vitals, rather than submit to Cæsar, exclaiming,

> **"O liberty! O virtue! O my country!"**

But — did he first emancipate a single one of his bondsmen? The mass of the democracy favored the Roman Bonaparte, because he bettered their condition. Cato, the incarnation of the aristocracy, abhorred him, because he would have reduced his order to their proper level — that of mere men. Cato's death was no loss to the republic, whatever it might have been to the patricians.

When Brutus and Cassius stabbed Cæsar on the steps of the Capitol, did they strike for their country or their class? Cæsar had more benefited his country than the whole then existing patrician order. But Brutus and Cassius were the "last of the Romans." Would it were even so! Better one able, useful despot, like Cæsar, than a thousand Brutuses and Cassiuses. Better one absolute prince than a hundred petty tyrants — bear witness the oligarchy of Venice.

In like manner, too, Russian Poland rebelled (so scribblers tell us) against the Emperor Nicholas, in 1830. They do not say, however, who rebelled, or why; whether it was the ever-turbulent nobility, who had crushed the mass and deluged the land with blood for centuries, who revolted, or the downtrodden multitude. They do not inform us whether the constitution granted them by Alexander, in 1815, was an improvement on the government, or rather the no-government of Poland before its partition; or why what satisfied them under Alexander was insupportable under his brother Nicholas. They do not tell us whether the leaders of the insurrection were nobles, or men of the people, and they leave us in the dark as to their ultimate designs. For all they tell us, the revolt may have been without aim or object. It does not appear that Prince Czartoryski, or Prince Radzivil, or

any of the insurgent chiefs, ever so much as dreamed of "the greatest good of the greatest number," any more than Cato and the spurious patriots who would not brook the humanizing dictation of Cæsar. It is true, their motives may have been purely patriotic; but this is left to sympathizing conjecture.

"O Liberty! how many crimes have been perpetrated in thy name!" exclaimed the virtuous and accomplished Madame Roland, just before her head rolled on the scaffold. There is magic in the word. Monsters in human form used it to decimate France; with the word *liberty*, Cromwell turned England from a limited monarchy into a despotism. The word is a good word, and Stephen Girard's name was a good name; but it behoves us, when we are called upon to harness ourselves, like horses or asses, to cannon for the oppressed Poles, or to send supplies to the suffering Greeks, to ascertain whether the statue set up by either is the oft-violated virgin Liberty, or a gilded idol, as much as it does the cashier of a bank to be sure that Girard's own hand wrote his name on a check, before he honors it.

More keenly, perhaps, is the word *liberty* felt by an Englishman or an American, than by any other native of the world. We have had our struggles, and, praised be God! they have been successful; and any appeal to us, from a people in supposed like circumstances, comes to us with double force. Tell us that a people are oppressed, and we hurl anathemas at the oppressor, without stopping to make the least inquiry; tell us that any people (provided they be white) are struggling for freedom, and our blood circulates with a quicker rush. Thus Andrew Jackson, when he was interrupted

in driving a chain-gang of negroes through the Choctaw nation, wrote to the war department, "Are we slaves, or are we free men?" Thus we poured our thousands into the territory of Mexico, to fight for the *liberty* of Texas — the liberty to establish and perpetuate slavery where it had been abolished. Thus nine tenths of us are at this moment about to vote for one or the other of two men, for our President, who are both known to be favorable to the permanence of slavery on our own shores, because, forsooth, they are guessed to be favorable to liberal government. As, in the mechanism of the animal body, there is a great waste of power, so there is a great waste of sympathy in the human, and especially in the American mind.

The wrongs of which our fathers complained, the objects for which they fought, in the revolution, were clearly defined and set forth in the Declaration of Independence. The world knows, now, that our cause was just, and rejoices that it triumphed. It might have known so then, if there had been a disposition to inquire and examine; but neither we, nor the world at large, know any thing concerning the causes of the revolt of the *soi-disant* patriots in Poland, in 1830, of the condition of the Russian nation, or of the character and intentions of the much-calumniated and everywhere-but-in-Russia-detested emperor, Nicholas the First.

A dog will whine when a plaintive air is played on a pipe, and a buffalo will shut his eyes and rush headlong at any inoffensive person in a scarlet coat. Just so, and with as little reflection, when the wrongs of Poland and the oppression of Russia are mentioned, our hearts and our purses open, we know not for what; and when we hear of a riot or a struggle, we pant to be engaged in it.

It is thus that we take the part of a small man chastised by a big one, without asking or caring what insolence or provocation has merited the flagellation. It is a holy feeling that prompts us — pity it is, it is so liable to be abused!

At the risk of being ridiculed and hated, we avow that our feelings have been enlisted in favor of the Russian people, and of the Emperor Nicholas in particular, by the simple fact that, like us, the Russians have been treated by the writers of other nations with rancor and obloquy without stint or measure, and that the emperor is seldom, if ever, mentioned without reproach. Reflection and inquiry have satisfied us, that by far the greatest part of this dislike is equally unfounded and unmerited; for it is long that we have been convinced that America and England do not monopolize all the freedom, all the valor, all the learning, and all the intelligence, in the universe.

Two of the causes, doubtless, that lead to this general abhorrence of Russia, are fear and envy; a third is distance, which magnifies danger, just as it

> "———— lends enchantment to the view,
> And robes the landscape with an azure hue."

Omne ignotum pro magnifico est: — we know that Russia has swallowed a part of Poland, and threatens to swallow Turkey and Persia also, and the learned folly of Europe fears that her gorge is capacious enough for more, forgetting that Poland fell less by Russia's strength than by its own weakness, and that large bodies are slow of action. We recollect the remark of an Indian chief, on the power of the United States, on a visit to the navy-yard in Brooklyn. "You cannot," said he, pointing to the line-of-battle ships, "bring those guns to bear

upon us in our distant prairies." In like manner, the colossal power of Russia will and must melt "like the baseless fabric of a vision," long before it can become dangerous to the civilization of Europe.

Toward us and England, Russia must necessarily be forever impotent and innocuous, till she shall have become a maritime power, which she never can be, with no other practicable outlets but the Cattegat and the Dardanelles. Her navy, seen at a distance, looks formidable, it is true, in ships, men, and guns; but approach it, and the kraken diminishes to a skate or flounder. The military marine of Russia consists of fifty line-of-battle ships and twenty-five frigates, with fifteen war-steamers on the Baltic, and seventeen on the Euxine. These ships are managed and fought by fifty thousand men, who, as far as courage goes, are not to be surpassed. Sir Edmund Codrington did not complain of the Russian fleet at Navarino. Thirty thousand of these men are employed in the Baltic, and twenty thousand in the Black Sea. But it is one thing to have ships and men, and another to have sailors; they cannot be made by decrees and ukases.

To have sailors, a country must have ports. Russia has but a few on the Baltic, (which are locked up five months in the year by ice,) and but one, of any consequence, (Sebastopol,) in the Crimea. The service of the Baltic fleet consists of cruising in the brackish water of the Gulf of Finland, between Cronstadt, Riga, and Revel, never out of sight of land. The periodical storms of the Euxine interrupt its navigation, also, for several months of the year; and, were it otherwise, that sea affords no more facilities for rearing sailors than our great lakes.

When Peter the Great opened the Baltic to Rus-

sia, and determined to create a navy, he no doubt expected that it would be supported by a commercial marine; but, in this, he overlooked the limits that Nature herself had put to the commerce of Russia. Ships can be built any where, where there is wood; but seamen can only be formed by countries with such coasts as those of Great Britain and the United States. There is, consequently, not a really Russian mariner to be found in the Baltic on board a merchantman. It is true that the laws of Russia require every Russian vessel to have a nominal Russian master, who is often a peasant, sleeps in the forecastle, and acts as cook, while the chief mate, a Finn or a foreigner, works the ship.

The only part of the Russian naval force, who have any claim to be called seamen, are about twenty thousand Finns, and a few Greeks and foreigners. Over and above these, the navy is recruited exactly like the army, and from the same sources. The whole, being confined to their harbors for half the year, are necessarily employed and equipped as half-sailors, half-soldiers; and, when at sea, few of them ever get thoroughly over their sea-sickness.

No country beyond sea, therefore, has aught to fear from the ambition of Russia. We could fill a volume with matter of fact confirmatory of the position we have taken in this regard; but it needs not. As men cannot train for gymnastic games in shackles, so neither can they learn to swim or become mariners without water, and Russia never can become formidable at sea. Talents cannot effect impossibilities. Napoleon could not form seamen in France; Peter could not, and Nicholas cannot, do it in Russia. They have done all that mere

men could do, and the wonder is, not that they have done so little, but that they have accomplished so much. In another view of the case, it will be found that neither Russia, nor France, nor we, have done half enough for our own defence.

The invention of shell shot, and the application of steam to the navigation of the ocean, have begun, and are destined to achieve, an entire revolution in marine warfare, and in the attack and defence of seaboards. The invention of gunpowder was not fated to effect more important changes. Without entering into a labored argument, let us consider a few facts, and then judge of the future by the past.

A few French ships battered down the castle of St. Juan de Ulloa, (deemed impregnable before,) with Paixhan shot, in four hours, though gallantly defended; and reduced Santa Anna and Mexico to submission.

St. Jean d'Acre was laid in ruins by the combined fleets of England, France, and Russia, in fewer hours than it cost Napoleon and his Egyptian army weeks; and the slaughter on the side of Mehemet Ali was prodigious.

Beyroot was treated in the same way by the allied fleet; not a tenth of the city remained standing, nor were a third of its defenders left alive.

Of what avail were the swarming numbers, the devoted courage, and the strong fortifications of the Chinese against steam and shell-shot at Amoy, the Bogue, and elsewhere? What, but to glut death, and to add to human misery!

And what is to insure Russia against the like treatment, but timely preparation to meet force with force, and navy with navy? Surely, not the

justice or moderation of Great Britain. Did justice, and the laws of nations and of honor, protect Copenhagen? What, in the event of a war with England, will save Cronstadt, Riga, Revel, Baltisport, Nicolaiew, Sebastopol, Odessa, and St. Petersburg itself, from the fate of Beyroot and Amoy, but a navy adequate to the emergency? That it will not be their fortifications, is as clear as that the shell of a filbert cannot protect the kernel from the hammer. Nor is such a contingency at all improbable. The writers of the Polish Propaganda are already exciting the cupidity of the British people in the British periodicals, and demonstrating the certainty of their success in a maritime war with Russia.

What shall save Boston and New York, and our whole seaboard, from the same fearful doom, if — which may God in his goodness avert! — the advocates of Texas and slavery should succeed in picking a quarrel with Great Britain? In our unprovoked hatred of Mexico, our absurd sympathy with Poland, and our equally unfounded dislike of Nicholas and Russia, we overlook the real point of danger, though millions cry to us, from their graves in India and China, to take warning. England, not Russia, is the enemy the world has to dread; England, on whose territory the sun never sets, whose canvass whitens every wave, whose resources are the purse of Fortunatus and the lamp of Aladdin; England, whose caoutchouc national conscience is matched with the greed of the horseleech, which crieth, "Not enough!" and for whose ready grasp and capacious gorge a continent is not too great, or a minnow too little.

If the reader can lay prejudice and sympathy on the shelf for five minutes, we shall assuredly satis-

fy him that we are not speaking the exaggerated language of poetry, but the words of truth and soberness. Here are facts: deny them who can.

The navy of Great Britain numbers a hundred and twenty sail of the line, and a hundred and forty frigates, *with the means of manning them*, not to speak of what is of more importance — between two and three hundred war-steamers. The united world besides, in 1840, could muster but a hundred and seventy-five line-of-battle ships, and a hundred and ninety-five frigates.

Of this latter force, at the same time, France, Russia, and the United States, had, collectively, but a hundred and twenty sail of the line, and a hundred and seventeen frigates — *and how manned?*

They had, collectively, a mercantile marine not exceeding 1,700,000 tons afloat on salt water. These, and their navies, were manned with two hundred and twenty thousand men. Together with her fishermen, and crews of vessels of under thirty tons, Britain has three hundred and seventy thousand *sailors*. Moreover, she can at any time send to sea four times as many war-steamers as the combined world; and she alone, among nations, has the funds to furnish forth such armadas.

The whole number of people France, Russia, and the United States, employ in aquatic pursuits, does not exceed two hundred and forty thousand men.

The registered tonnage of the United States, on salt water, is 1,000,000 of tons, and employs about eighty thousand men, of all nations. Moreover, we have but four war-steamers, of which one is literally good for nothing, and almost our entire sea-coast is without defence.

If, therefore, we should save our ignorant sym-

pathy with Poland, and leave off bewailing the miseries of slavery and despotism in Russia, — if, instead thereof, we should follow the wise and patriotic example of the detested despot, Nicholas, in preparing for the contest we are insanely trying to provoke, and which will assuredly be forced on him and us, whenever it shall seem profitable to British cupidity, — we should show less spurious zeal for freedom, indeed, but we should also evince a little common sense, and some consistency.

These will be unpalatable truths to the conceit and arrogance of mobs, revolting to the ignorance that must largely abound among a people in a state of transition, like ourselves and Russia; for ignorance is the concomitant of mobs, as well as of a despotism. We regret that wars may arise to retard the improvement and prosperity either of the United States or Russia. But it is not by fostering prejudice, or by concealing the truth, that the spread of liberal principles is to be promoted; and the first step toward the knowledge of others is to know ourselves. The more severe our self-examination, the more certain is our amendment, and we will not shun to tell the sick their danger, because the medicine is bitter.

We have said that Russia is an object of envy, as well as of fear, to the rest of Europe. The armies of France have found their graves in her soil; her arms have been felt in every part of Europe but Great Britain. Is not this enough to make her an object of fear? Power is terrible. What nation has more of it than Russia? and, if population and wealth are power, Nicholas the First has sixty-one millions of subjects, of whom upwards of twenty-two millions are liable to military service; a standing army of more than a million; and a

yearly revenue of fifty-five millions of dollars, at least; probably more.

To be convinced that there are many things in barbarous Russia to be envied by civilized Christendom, let the reader turn to the pages of Khol, of any of the encyclopedias, or to any work whatever on the empire.

"Strike, but hear!" is the legend of a lecture addressed to the members of our several state legislatures, on the affairs of Poland, by Major G. Tochman, a Polish exile, and, probably, one of the Polish Propaganda. Albeit no one in this country, we believe, is at all disposed to strike a blow in Poland, unless in her aid, we fully admit the justice and force of the appeal. If Poland has not already had hearings enough, let her have more.

Strike Russia, and the Emperor Nicholas, too, as hard as feeling and opinion can strike; but, in impartial justice, first hear what can be said in their defence.

In the first place, there is now established in England and France a Propaganda, or missionary seminary, at the head of which is Prince Adam Czartoryski, president of the provisional government of Poland in 1830 and 1831, who was condemned to death by the imperial ukase, in September, 1834, for the part he took in the insurrection. Prince Adam was the longest-descended, the richest, the most talented and the most influential man in Poland previous to that event. He it is whom the Propaganda expect, and avowedly intend, to place on the throne of Poland, should she ever recover her independence.* His lady is at the head of the female Propaganda, consisting of French and English women, whose object it is, as of the male branch, to

* Tochman.

educate the children not only of Poles, but also of other people, in hatred of Russia. These are the political Jesuits, who maintain and send writers and lecturers to the four corners of the earth, to disseminate their views and opinions. The inferior members of the Propaganda are exiled Poles and their sympathizers; and it is of his would-be majesty, King Adam, and his subjects, that we receive our political opinions in regard to Russia and Poland. They have one college in England, and another in France, where Polish patriotism and politics, and English, French, and the Polish dialect of the Sclavonian, are taught together.

While we admire the heroic bravery displayed by the insurgent Poles in the late struggle with Russia, as much as any one can; while we compassionate the misfortunes of such of them as are exiles from their native land; we take the liberty to say, that they have not made any very favorable impression of their general character on the people of France and the United States;* and that they are not the most unexceptionable referees that can be found with regard to facts or doctrine. Nevertheless, such has been the effect of their labors, that the Propaganda confidently expect to excite another rebellion in Poland within eighteen months

* "Men pretended to regard the Poles as allies of the republican party, (in 1833–34,) without considering that Poland was a republican *aristocracy*. Next, certain classes treated the Poles, who had been deified a few days before, with disdain. We must forcibly recall the shifts of Parisian opinion, to understand how the word *Polish* became a term of derision in 1835, in the centre of intelligence — in a city that now wields the sceptre of literature and the arts. There are, alas! two orders of Polish refugees — the republican Pole, the descendant of Lelewel, and the Polish noble, of the party of which Prince Czartoryski is the head. Without intending offence to the exiles, I must be allowed to remark that the levity, heedlessness, and inconsistency, of the Sarmatian character, gave color to the scandal of the Parisians." — BALZAC.

from the present date. This we have on the authority of one of the patriotic missionaries, and of this it is not to be supposed the Emperor Nicholas is ignorant. Hence the increased vigilance of the Russian government, and the difficulty of obtaining passports, so generally quoted in the newspapers as illustrations of arbitrary rule.

Hear, too, what was said by one of the Russian secretaries of the state, and head of the third section of the Chancery, to Leitch Ritchie.

"It seems strange to me, that you English should travel in Russia for the avowed purpose of making yourselves acquainted with the manners and character of the people, yet without comprehending a single word of their language. You come here with the grossest prejudices against us as a nation. You see every thing different from what you have been accustomed to at home, except the manners of some dozen families whom you visit. You make no inquiries, no reflections, no allowances. You examine this rude but mighty colossus, through your opera glass, or from the windows of your travelling chariot. In the towns, your *valet de place* is your prime authority; in the country, you wander about in utter darkness, unable to understand a single object, or to understand a single question. You then return home, satisfied with having attained the object of your tour, and sit down, without a single malevolent feeling in your breasts, but out of pure ignorance, to add to the mass of falsehoods and absurdities with which Europe is already inundated."

It seems, by this, that John Bull will be John Bull, wherever he goes.

To conclude, the empire of Russia is an anomaly among nations, and is therefore not to be

judged by any ordinary rules. Neither can any national character properly be said to belong to a population consisting of nine distinct races — without counting other foreign tribes, collectively numerous enough to form no insignificant kingdom. The emperor of Russia stands alone among monarchs, past and present: he is absolute power personified, without check or limitation, other than the laws of Nature herself impose; and this absolute power he did not achieve, like Napoleon, at the expense of millions of lives, but was born to. If his power has not the extent the Corsican conqueror's at one time had, it is, in recompense, far more perfect where it is acknowledged. No hereditary monarch or usurper, of times past, ever enjoyed the like. He is checked by no institutions, no laws; the land, and all that therein is, is his in fee simple: he is undisputed lord and master of the lives, the liberties, and the property, of many millions, from his richest noble to that noble's meanest serf. Other emperors may have had command of greater wealth and numbers; but never was any other ruler in himself such a concentration of all human authority; never was any man so completely, and at once, the king, the religion, and the fate, of his subjects. Now, it is an admitted and incontestable fact, that absolute monarchy would be the best of all possible governments, could it be placed, and always continue, in good hands. The Emperor Nicholas, therefore, is not to be abhorred for being, like all other men, the child of circumstances, which have placed him where he is, as they have placed others in degradation and bondage: he is only accountable to opinion for the use he has made of his power, and we do not fear to subject his character and actions to that test. If it shall appear that

he has abused his power, and injured the condition of his subjects, let him be condemned accordingly; but if, on the contrary, it shall prove that he has acted ably, wisely, and conscientiously, for the greater good of the greater number, we claim for him the highest name and the greenest wreath among the great and good men of the age. All the favor we ask for the Russian monarch is, that the reader, in judging of him, will bear in mind that Nicholas the First, with all his power, is but a man, with the same feelings and passions as other men.

CHAPTER II.

ABSOLUTE POWER NOT NECESSARILY A CURSE.— PETER ALEXIOWITSCH.

We take it for granted that the great mass of the reading public, in Europe and America, are nearly as ignorant of the social and political condition of Poland and the Russias, as they are of the interior of New Holland and Japan. How should it be otherwise, when all the information we have is derived from superficial observers, who may, indeed, describe the manners and outside of a nation, but are wholly unable to look deeper? Why is it tourists never speak truly of us? Because they can only see effects, while causes are hidden from them; because they judge of the whole from a part, as the Irish laborer formed his opinion of the house from a brick shown him as a specimen; because the first things they remark are exceptions, and because they convert the exception into the general rule. We maintain that a traveller, or historian, who writes of a foreign country, should have, at least, these qualifications: —

Candor, if not kindness, and some respect for, if not a love of, truth.

He should have eyes to see, and ears to hear; and yet, these will be of little use to him, if he has not brains to understand; for it does not suffice to tell how a people are clad, or what they eat and what they drink; nor is it of much importance to describe places, and record distances and dimensions.

He should be able to speak, or at least to read and understand, the language of the country.

He should be a little acquainted with the leading points, at least, of its history, laws, and institutions.

He should have lived at least ten years in it, and conversed familiarly with all its classes, before he presumes to pronounce, *ex cathedra*, on any thing.

We do not mean to say that nothing useful, or worthy of reliance, has been written concerning Russia; but we mean to assume that such matter is diffused so sparsely, through so many volumes, in so many languages, that no ordinary reader can be expected to have made himself master of it all. For example —

Ninety-nine men in a hundred believe, and will maintain, that the regeneration of Russia was an original idea of Peter the First, justly surnamed the Great, and that it began with him. They have never heard of Ivan Vassilievitsch; it is a chance if they are aware that Peter had a father, or that that father's name was Alexis. They do not know that the Russians were sufficiently civilized to build the important cities of Novogorod and Kiow in the fifth and sixth centuries.

Fear not, reader: we are not going to give you a history of Russia; but some historical details are absolutely necessary.

Ivan Vassilievitsch the Great reigned from 1462 to 1505. With him properly began the civilization of Russia, and in his reign it assumed a name and a rank among nations. He it was who freed Russia from the Tartar yoke under which it had groaned for two centuries and a half. Ivan made the indivisibility of the realm a fundamental law,

after adding to it Kasan, and Tver, and Astrachan. He first introduced fire-arms, and cast cannon, and taught his Scythians to burn bricks, and to build. He set the example of inviting foreigners to Moscow, and making use of their superior knowledge. German artists and *savans* went to receive the protection and encouragement of his son, the second Ivan, and by him was a printing-press first established, which was preached against by the clergy as necromantic, and destroyed with fire at their instigation. He made a commercial treaty with Elizabeth of England, and established a standing army. In his reign, Siberia was discovered — to be added to Russia by his successor.

To Alexis, the father of Peter the Great, Russia owes the establishment of the highest posts in the empire, and the first abasement of the clergy.

Feodor, his son and successor, also did much to encourage industry, and improve the commerce, organization, and legislation, of Russia. Till his reign, the nobility claimed the highest posts of the empire, by prescriptive right. Feodor put an end to their claims, by burning their pedigrees.

It will be seen, by what has been stated, that the civilization of Russia was not created, or begun, by Peter; but has been slowly progressive from the fifteenth century. We do not detract from the glorious fame of Peter in so saying. Shakspeare wrought not always with his own materials; but he made the materials of others his own, by his fashioning. So the mighty genius of Peter strode over centuries at a step. Needs not to dwell on the all-but miracles he wrought by his iron will — are they not recorded by the immortal pen of Voltaire? would not the reading of half the volumes already written in commemoration of them exhaust the life of Methuselah?

Every reproach that has been heaped upon the Emperor Nicholas will apply to Peter, of ever-glorious memory, with tenfold force, with two exceptions. Peter's personal character was not impeccable; though his faults were the faults of his age — that of Nicholas is above reproach. Peter, who could so ably rule others, could never rule himself — he was a barbarian; a wonderful one, indeed, but still a barbarian. Nicholas is a *gentleman*, in every sense of the word.

Thus speaks Leitch Ritchie (a Scotchman) of the much abused *autocrat:* —

"The emperor, who is a very tall and very handsome man, is naturally of a very lively disposition. He is always dressed with great precision, and every one understands that it is necessary to appear before him both well dressed and with a cheerful countenance. He is easy of access, and seems to think an appearance of state almost unnecessary. At St. Petersburg, however, at each side of the door which leads to the imperial apartments, stands a man gorgeously dressed in Eastern costume. There are twelve of these men, who relieve each other alternately in the duty of opening and shutting the door, and announcing the name of the visitor.

"After breakfast, the emperor's first care is to go to the nursery to see his children, and ascertain how they have slept. He takes each of them up, kisses them, romps with them; for he is full of frolic, and glad to be a boy again when the cares of the world will let him.

"Their majesties dine at three o'clock, (the general hour for the upper classes in Russia,) with great simplicity; and toward the conclusion of the meal, the Grand Duke Alexander and the younger

children come in to kiss their parents. When they rise from table, the emperor bestows upon his consort, also, some hearty kisses. He calls her "his wife;" but the empress, who is a Prussian, never alludes to him but as "the emperor." She speaks English extremely well; but Nicholas only indifferently.

"'The character of the emperor and empress,' writes an English friend, to me, 'is such, that it is difficult to speak of them without exciting in strangers a suspicion that the description is overcharged. It is no exaggeration to say that I never saw a family where *more* affection and harmony existed; and I believe the examples to be very rare, indeed, where *so much* can be discovered. I have frequently seen these illustrious individuals surrounded by their children, and have partaken of the influence every one receives who witnesses the scene; and I can say that, in their domestic virtues, they are worthy of being held forth as a pattern, not only to all sovereigns, but to all mankind.'"

The great charge against Nicholas, as against Peter, is, that he is a despot; i. e., the one possessed, as the other possesses, arbitrary power. Let us see how Peter employed it.

In 1689, the Russians were Scythians; that is to say, savages, or not very far from it. Peter, by main force, made them civilized men. Having no seaports on the Black Sea, the Baltic, or any where else, excepting Archangel, amidst almost eternal ice, — Russia had no commerce, and was, to all intents and purposes, a part of Asia. By acquiring the present Russian coasts of the Baltic, by building a maritime capital and creating a navy, Peter brought his country into the European family of

nations. It is true, that all this was not done without much violation of individual right, without much hardship, or without a great sacrifice of life.

So there is much hardship, and much invasion of private right, in manning the British navy, the mighty national weapon of defence and offence to which, probably, Britain owes her very existence, and certainly the great rank she holds among nations. There was a great waste of British life at Trafalgar and Aboukir Bay. But what have been her loss and her suffering to her gain? and what were the few thousands sacrificed by Peter to the millions remaining? He had a power more like a god's than a mere mortal's, and like a god he used it. As the storm, and the earthquake, and the volcano, though they destroy individuals, benefit the mass, so Peter's violent measures wrought the greatest good of the greatest number; the evil he did has passed away; the good remains;—a world admires, and sixty-one grateful millions bless his name. As the car of destiny rolls on, the individuals, and thousands, and generations it crushes in its course are but items in the account of general change to be accomplished. Poetical justice is, indeed, a pretty thing to talk about; but, in the affairs of nations, it is a thing that never has had, and never will have an existence.

The Strelitzes, or standing army of Russia, conspired and revolted again and again, without any reasonable pretext. Peter subdued them, and beheaded and broke on the wheel princes, generals, and prelates, involved in their guilt. On the third occasion, he quenched their rebellion in their blood, which he did not scruple to shed with his own hand: upwards of two thousand of the conspira-

tors were executed; and, as this happened in mid-winter, their frozen corpses remained where they had suffered till warm weather, — with their crimes written over their heads. Their houses were razed to the ground, and their very name abolished; while those who were spared were banished to Siberia, with their wives and families.

Who doubts that, acting thus rigorously, Peter also acted with humanity? For every turbulent rebel who died, Russia counted one malefactor the less; for every malefactor he slew, he saved, in consequence, the lives of two valuable subjects. Those only who object to the gallows for criminals, and ball cartridges for mobs, will blame Peter for destroying the Strelitzes, or Mahmoud for exterminating the Janizaries.

In the year A. D. 1700, in the art of war, Russia was beneath criticism, — beneath contempt; it was, then, what China is now. In November of that year, Charles XII., of Sweden, defeated thirty-eight thousand Russians, and took twenty thousand prisoners, with eight thousand Swedes, at Narva. Such was the universal ignorance, then, in Russia, of church and lay, that the defeat was every where attributed to sorcery, and prayers were put up to Saint Nicholas, in all the churches, against the Swedes.* Peter, alone, was not in the least dis-

* "O thou, our constant comforter in all our adversities, great Saint Nicholas! infinitely powerful! how is it that we have sinned against thee in our sacrifices, our genuflections, our salutations, or our thanksgivings, that thou shouldst thus have forsaken us? We implored thine aid against these terrible, insolent, frantic, frightful, untamable destroyers, when, like lions, and like bears robbed of their cubs, they attacked, and made us afraid, and wounded, and slew us by thousands; we, thy people. As this cannot have come to pass without witchcraft and enchantment, we entreat thee, O mighty Saint Nicholas! to be our champion and standard-bearer, and to deliver us from this host of sorcerers, and to drive them far, far from our borders, with the reward that is due to them!"

VOLTAIRE, *Histoire de Charles XII.*

couraged. "I know," said he, "that the Swedes will beat us again and again; but they will teach us to fight, and our turn will come at last."

And the Russians were beaten again and again, and thousands of lives were lost, and still they kept learning; and what have been the consequences?

Nine years after the disastrous day of Narva, Peter, with nearly equal numbers, defeated Charles, at whose name all Europe trembled, at Pultowa, destroyed his army, and forced him to fly for refuge into Turkey. Russia has preserved the integrity of her territory ever since; has baffled even the power and genius of Napoleon; millions of lives have been saved, that would otherwise have been lost; and Russia is the first military power in the world.

Would that China had been governed by a Peter, within the last ten years! Then might the Chinese, and the English, too, have learned a like lesson, and, ultimately, might would not have overcome right.

Here an absolute monarch was a Messiah. Under any other form of government, or under a less able czar than Peter, Russia would have disappeared, as a nation, from the map of Europe, as Poland has done.

The question here arises, whether Peter was a patriot, or not; whether he was actuated, in the great things he did, by love of country, or by the selfishness of an individual, who, possessing an empire in fee simple, merely aimed at enlarging and improving his property. Was he an imperial William Tell, or Washington, or an aristocratic patriot, like the cut-throat conspirators of Rome, before Christ?

When, in 1711, Peter was surrounded by the

Turks at Jassy, on the Pruth, with nothing in prospect before him but captivity or death, he wrote to the senate, in Moscow, "If I fall into the hands of the enemy, consider me no longer as your sovereign, and obey no command that shall proceed from the place of my confinement, though it should be signed by my own hand. If I perish, choose the worthiest among you to succeed me."

This certainly looks very little like selfishness.

We have said, that it is not our intention to write a history of Russia; neither do we think of writing a biography of Peter; but it is essential to our purpose to show, that a despotic government is not, necessarily, the worst evil that can befall a nation; and we claim the further indulgence of the reader, while we endeavor to prove that, when the sovereign is a good and wise man, it may be the greatest of blessings, inasmuch as there are many reforms that an absolute monarch may effect, which a limited one, or a republican government, dares not even attempt.

Perceiving that the peasants and lower classes were oppressed by the boyarins, or nobles, Peter appointed a board of commissioners to inquire into such abuses; and the result was, the exile into Siberia of a great number of civil officers of the three first ranks, and the establishment of strict laws against the like abuses in future.

We have not yet read that Great Britain ever punished a West India planter for abusing his slaves; and we do not look to see the day when the general government of free America, or of any of its several sovereignties, will send a Virginian, or Georgian, or Carolinian boyarin to the state prison, or the penitentiary, even for the murder of one of his serfs; not but that the despotic Peter set us

a worthy example how to act for the greater good of the greater number.

Peter did not consider it prudent to abolish slavery in Russia, in his own time, though he gave it his most serious consideration.

Neither did France consider it prudent to abolish slavery in her colonies, till her own down-trodden masses took the reins of government into their own hands, and, having known the bitterness of thraldom, and tasted the sweets of liberty, themselves magnanimously said to their slaves, "Be ye free, also!"—and this was not till long after Czar Peter's time.

Neither did Great Britain consider it prudent to set her slaves free, till ten years ago; and that class of her citizens and nobles who most feelingly sympathize with the Poles, and most malevolently abhor and loudly denounce the Emperor Nicholas, deny the propriety of the measure, to this day.

Neither do we and our southern brethren think it prudent to liberate our slaves, yet; and, like patriotic freemen as we are, we quarrel with, and are ready to plunder Mexico for having done so.

We do not approve of slavery in Russia, or any where else; but we can conceive some very good reasons why Peter, then, and Nicholas, now, might not think it prudent to abolish slavery. Would to Heaven they were as available in our own justification!

First, there are 61,000,000 of people in Russia, of whom more than 22,000,000 are serfs, or slaves. There are, perhaps, 20,000,000 of people in the United States, of whom about 2,500,000 are slaves. We do not pretend to strict accuracy in our computation, but it is as near as we have the data for making, and, probably, as nigh the truth in the

one case as the other. Let us suppose, therefore, (what is not far from the truth,) that one eighth of our population, and rather less than a third of that of Russia, are slaves, or serfs, or whatever the reddest heat of patriotism, Polish or American, may choose to call them.

It may not be safe, or easy, at once to emancipate 22,000,000 of slaves, in a country menaced on all sides like Russia, from time immemorial, and, in Peter's time, engaged in wars that shook its fabric to its foundation. But there would certainly be no danger to 17,500,000 people, at peace with all the world, or any difficulty, in emancipating 2,500,000 slaves, if they were so minded, and if their boasted love of liberty was aught but base hypocrisy and an empty sound.

Slavery is scattered all over Russia, and two thirds of the entire people are interested in its continuance. Slavery is confined to less than a third part of our territory, and not a third part of our entire population are interested in its continuance.

It might be dangerous for even a despotic sovereign to attack the interests of the two thirds of his subjects, possessing all the wealth and intelligence of his dominions. The free people of the United States might, and, some day, we trust, will, without difficulty or danger, persuade the slaveholding states to give up their slaves; but they are but an eighth of our population. Moreover, we are prepared to prove, and shall, in the proper place, that the system of vassalage in Russia is not unmitigated slavery, and that the need of emancipation is not, and never was, half so urgent in Russia as in the United States.

But this is an enlightened land of liberty, and Russia is a degraded land of slavery; and yet,

there is apparently half, and, in reality, twice as much slavery in the United States as there is in Russia.

At all events, the despotic czar, Peter, did something to ameliorate slavery. Our southern brethren, on the contrary, have done all they could to aggravate, and are doing all they can to perpetuate and extend it.

Whatever may be said of absolute sovereignty in other respects, there is one, in Russia, in which it is synonymous with absolute liberty; we mean, with regard to religious opinions. It is true that Peter put to death one of the Roskolnicks, or sectaries of the ancient faith; but it was not as a heretic that the religionary suffered, or contrary to his own desire to win a crown of martyrdom, which he conceived he might make sure of by an attempt to assassinate the czar. In all other religious matters, Peter acted with the greatest prudence, and practised and enjoined the most unbounded toleration — an example that has been followed by all his successors.

It needs no ghost from the grave to tell us, that, if the union of church and state be an evil, the separate temporal power of the church is a worse. Peter effected its total destruction, without the merciless persecutions and oppressions that have commemorated the downfall of hierarchies in other countries. He did not attempt to depose the prelate in possession, though he curbed his ghostly power. When the patriarch remonstrated with him against changing the ancient customs of his subjects, and especially their dress, without their consent and against their will, —

"Father," replied the czar, "are you not the head of the Russian church?"

"Yes, sire, by your favor," rejoined the prelate.

"Then why do you turn head and advocate of tailors?" asked Peter. "I intend to give my subjects better proofs of my love and care than what depends on the imaginary consequence of dress."

When this aged prelate died, Peter declared himself head of the church, and would suffer no successor to be elected. He appointed the learned metropolitan of Rezan, instead, to the administration of affairs, and ordered the chief clergy to degrade one of their number for censuring the measure. On their excuse, that they had no spiritual power to degrade their equal, he appointed a bishop of his own, for the express purpose. There was much grumbling; but it availed the malcontents nothing.

One law he made that should alone immortalize him; a law that many civilized nations may blush to read to this day. He forbade any man in the public service, any settled burgess, and, above all, any minor, to enter a monastery.

Women have especial reason to bless the despot Peter's name. He first ordained that no couple should be married without their own free consent, or till after an acquaintance of at least six weeks. The consequences have been, that there has been less cruelty on tne part of husbands, and fewer executions of wives for the murder of their partners. He also ordered his married nobles to travel, and to take their wives with them, that they might share their opportunities for information and improvement.

The Russians began their year in September, because they imagined that the world was created in autumn, when the fruits were ripe. Peter taught them that the world had two hemispheres, and reformed their calendar.

Peter was not omniscient: of course, his judgment was not always correct. We cannot see what right he had to enact sumptuary laws, or by what association of ideas he connected them with civilization. We do not see the use or propriety of taking off men's beards by force. Nevertheless, a despotic government is necessarily a military one, and the first principle of law martial is, that orders must be obeyed, right or wrong. The general who suffers the soldier to dispute his commands, has virtually laid down his authority from that moment. Having once ordered his subjects to be shaved, it became matter of necessity with Peter to depilate their chins; for, from the moment when the ukase of an emperor of Russia shall have been successfully resisted, the empire will date its decay and dissolution. Who, and especially what military man, can doubt, that, had the Polish insurrection been successful, Lithuania, Finland, Livonia, and all the former Swedish provinces, would also have revolted, and that Russia, in fine, would have been dismembered, and carried back to the political weakness and condition in which Ivan Vassilievitsch found it?

The rapidity with which Peter achieved his work of improvement justifies his violence, as it was only exerted for good. But for the terror he inspired, St. Petersburg and the Russian navy would not now be in existence. The priesthood powerfully aided him in his undertaking; not from good-will, or because they comprehended his aims, but because it was unsafe for them to do otherwise. When he commanded the peasantry to shave, as a practice of cleanliness, they, regarding the excrescence as a sacred relic of nationality, consulted one of the bishops on the propriety of compliance.

"Death is the penalty of disobedience, my friends," replied the prelate. "I recommend to you to comply with the imperial ukase. Remember, that beards will grow again; but heads will not."

The Russian character is more deeply and thoroughly imbued with loyalty than that of any other nation of whom history tells, with the exception, perhaps, of the Chinese and Japanese. Before Peter forbade them, the Russians gloried in calling themselves their prince's slaves. His will they regarded, and regard, as the will of God, and their paramount rule of action. A yoke that, under a bad monarch, would be insupportable, has been rendered easy and natural to the nation by religious feeling and long habit. They tremble or exult at the very sight of the emperor, accordingly as they believe he has reason to be displeased with them, or otherwise. Would he permit it, they would throw themselves at his feet as he passes; and they confess, with their lips and their lives, that they have nothing of their own, and that they hold their lives and possessions of his bounty, and only during his gracious pleasure. The czar is the head of the church and state, the chief of the army, and the fountain of rewards and honors; but would all this have sufficed to make Russian loyalty a religion and a fanaticism, if the imperial power had not ever been exerted for the good of the people? if it had not ever been the barrier between them and oppression? Would he have ever received the endearing title of "father," from his subjects, if he had not deserved it?

When Alexis conspired against his father, Peter the Great, and was by him condemned to death, Prince Menzikoff was charged with the execution of the sentence. At sunset, looking from a win-

dow of his palace, Peter thought he saw his son mount the scaffold; he saw the axe glitter, and the head fall. He was mistaken; hoping that he would relent, Menzikoff had deceived him, and the next day informed him that Alexis still lived. Peter renewed the sentence, and, this time, Alexis saved his head by dying a natural death. The reader may suppose that some condemned criminal was executed in the czarowitch's stead. Not so; it was a young soldier, who, of his own free will, had offered to die for his prince; and were a substitute for the emperor, or his son, wanted now, there would not be lacking multitudes ready and eager to lay their heads on the block, either in the army or among the people.

The merit of this devotedness is enhanced by the fact, that few of the great crimes which imply and involve a contempt of life are committed in Russia; murder scarcely ever, though theft and robbery are of daily and hourly occurrence. The Russian depredator is neither ferocious nor cruel. Peter himself has left us his reasons for depriving his son of the succession. After a long list of his causes of complaint against Alexis, he proceeds, —

"Albeit, our son, by so long a course of disobedience against us, his father and lord, and particularly by the dishonor he hath cast upon us in the face of the world, by withdrawing himself and raising calumnies of us, and by opposing his sovereign, hath deserved to be punished with death, nevertheless, our paternal affection inclines us to have mercy on him, and we, therefore, pardon his crimes, and exempt him from all punishments of the same; but, considering his unworthiness, we cannot, in conscience, leave him after us the suc-

cession of the throne of Russia, foreseeing that he would entirely destroy the glory of our nation and the safety of our dominions, which, through God's assistance, we have acquired and established by an incessant application.

"As we should pity our faithful subjects if, by such a successor, we should throw them back into a worse condition than they were ever in yet, so, by the paternal authority, in virtue of which, by the laws of our empire, any even of our subjects may disinherit a son, and in quality of sovereign prince, we do deprive our son Alexis of the succession, *even though there should not remain a single person of our family after us*, &c.

"We lay upon our said son Alexis our paternal curse, if ever he pretends to, or reclaims, the succession; and all those who shall ever, at any time, oppose this our will, and shall dare to consider our son Alexis as our successor, or to assist him in that purpose, we declare traitors to us and their country."

From what is positively known of the character of Alexis, it appears, that, in so much as is here set down, Peter acted justly, wisely, and patriotically. This young man, by his own showing, was perverted and corrupted by priests and flatterers.

In 1717, Peter again instituted an investigation into abuses and oppressions of the people. Prince Wolkonski, the governor of Archangel, was shot, and Peter did not spare even his favorites, Menzikoff and Apraxin. He endeavored to regulate the administration of justice, by instituting the colleges of the governments, and a legislative committee, taking the code of his father, Alexis, for the basis of his new system. He also erected a commercial college, and treated the commercial class with dis-

tinction. He sent the sons of his principal boyarins to different parts of Europe, to learn; taking himself the pains to ascertain their several peculiar talents, and recommending their several studies; and this he did without putting their parents to charges, paying their expenses from the public treasury. He forbade his subjects to write themselves his slaves. What did he not do, to refine and elevate his people? Not the least, or the least worthy, of his doings, was the banishment of the Jesuits from the soil of Russia.

The death of his son and heir had well nigh cost Peter his life; but one of his first acts, after his recovery, was for the benefit of his country, and the best interests of religion. It was the institution of the "Holy Directing Synod," designed to put an end to the hierarchy. In 1721, he concluded the peace of Nystadt, by which Livonia, Esthonia, and Ingria, with Wiburg and Kexholm, were added to Russia; and its power was fixed on a basis that has not yet been, and is not likely soon to be shaken. This great event was celebrated by an act of mercy; a general pardon of offenders, (murderers and incorrigible robbers excepted,) and a remission of all claims of the crown prior to 1717.

The holy synod and the senate prayed Peter, in the name of the nation, to accept the titles of "Father of his country, and Emperor of all the Russias, with the surname of the Great."

If what a man creates with his own hands is his property, Peter had earned a better right to treat Russia as his own than any other monarch that ever lived. But his views went farther than his own benefit; they reached to posterity. To prevent his great creation from falling into incompetent hands, and his work from stopping short of its

accomplishment, he decreed that the sovereign should have full power to appoint his successor, and to change the appointment, should he think fit.

He separated the legislative from the judicial function, by ordering that no senator should sit in a court of justice, and that no president of a court of justice should hold a seat in the senate.

In 1722, he instituted new investigations for maladministration, and condemned his favorite, the Vice-Chancellor Schaffiroff, to death. His sentence, however, was, on the scaffold, commuted to banishment. Menzikoff was amerced in a fine of twenty thousand rubles, and severely flogged by the emperor's own hand. Many other nobles were punished in like manner.

The remainder of Peter's life was employed in continuing the Ladoga canal, and protecting St. Petersburg against inundations; in the erection of an academy of arts and sciences; the trials of state criminals, the promotion of the labors of the legislature, the reformation and improvement of the clergy, the retrenchment of their exorbitant revenues; and in the formation of commercial treaties.

He died at the age of fifty-three, in February, 1725, and the last thing on his lips was an act of mercy, viz., the general pardon of all offenders; even conspirators against his person and government.

It may not be amiss, here, briefly to recapitulate what was done, by the most arbitrary sovereign on earth, for the advancement of the welfare of his subjects, over and above what has already been stated.

Augustus boasted that he had found Rome a city of brick, and left it one of marble. Peter the Great found the delta of the Neva a trackless swamp, and left — St. Petersburg.

He found the Russian army a mob; he left it a body of a hundred thousand infantry, as effective as any in Europe. Want of horses, only, hindered him from creating as good a cavalry.

At the beginning of his reign, Russia had not so much as a gun-boat, and was as little a maritime country as Paraguay. Peter left a navy of forty ships of the line, two hundred galleys, and several excellent harbors, seaport towns, and cities.

He established excellent municipal regulations in all the cities of Russia, once as unsafe as Hounslow Heath, or the roads of Calabria.

He left a naval and maritime college, to which the nobility were obliged to send their children —

Colleges in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Kiow, where the languages and sciences were taught, and schools in all the towns and villages, where the children of the peasantry learned — what even the nobility and clergy were ignorant of before — to read and write. Till then, the use of the numeral ciphers was unknown in Russia; a kind of tally, made with beads strung on wire, was employed instead, even in the czar's treasury. Nay, when the Patriarch Micon would have established two professorships of Latin and Greek, at Moscow, in the reign of Alexis Michaelowitz, he was disgraced for the mere intention. So great was the difference between Peter and his father! It was common among the Russians, till Peter's time, to say, when speaking of any thing hard to be comprehended, that "God and the czar only knew it" —

A college of physicians, an excellent dispensatory, at Moscow. Before Peter's time, the czar's own physician was usually the only one in Russia.

He had instituted public lectures in anatomy, a science whose very name was till then unknown.

For this purpose he had bought M. Ruisch's excellent cabinet, in itself a perpetual lecture. The discontented monks used his own printing-presses, to prove that Peter was Antichrist; for, they argued, he shaved the living, and dissected the dead in his anatomical college; moreover, the number 666 was not in his name. The author of this libel himself furnished a practical subject for a lecture on anatomy, being broken on the wheel for his ingenuity.

Not long before Peter's time, there was a surgeon in Moscow, who had a skeleton hung up in his chamber, near the window. One day, certain Strelitzes, passing by, saw the skeleton swinging in the wind, and at the same time heard the surgeon playing on the flute. Forthwith they reported that the dead bones had danced to the doctor's music, which was confirmed by others, who were sent to inquire into the truth, and the man of science only saved his life by flight from the country. The populace, however, dragged the skeleton about the streets and burned it, as they would have done its owner, if they could have laid hands on him.

Peter left a botanical garden, collected, not only from all parts of Europe, but from Persia, and all accessible parts of Asia, not excepting China; a very extensive royal library, collected from England, Holstein, and Germany; and a flourishing trade, for the encouragement of which he had built new towns, dug canals, and made roads, including that from Moscow to St. Petersburg, a distance of about four hundred and fifty miles.

He had caused the orthography of the Sclavonian tongue to be reformed, and improved the form of the types.

He had caused the Bible to be printed, and obliged every father of a family to take, at least, one copy; and it was therefore sold very cheap. Moreover, he commanded the clergy to preach only from the Scriptures.

He left an observatory where, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, the secretary of a Persian ambassador, on his way through Russia to Denmark, very narrowly escaped being burned alive, by the ignorant and superstitious populace, for having calculated and predicted an eclipse of the sun. The prediction was at first scouted, as such knowledge appeared impossible without sorcery; but, when the sun grew dim, it was not without difficulty that the secretary was rescued by the guards.

The eulogists of Peter the Great have left us nothing more to say in his praise; he needs nothing; his works are his best eulogium, and to them we have left it. The rest of the works of Peter Alexiowitsch, and what he did, and how he warred, and all his might, are they not written in all the chronicles of all the nations of Europe, and all the books of the kings of Persia and Turkey? We have said enough, however, to show that absolute monarchy may be favorable to improvement, and, in consequence, ultimately, to liberty. If the Almighty, in his infinite goodness and wisdom, ever chose a human instrument to work out a people's regeneration, Peter was that man. To his inspiration, the wisdom of all other reformers appears as folly, and their works, compared with his, look like ant-hills beside the eternal pyramids.

CHAPTER III.

EARLY CONDITION OF POLAND.—FACTS FROM HISTORY.

As we have not pretended to give a history of Russia, the reader will doubtless not expect one from us of Poland. There are abundance of histories, geographies, and patriotic tracts, to which he may refer for any particular information he may need. Our business with Poland is merely to consider its relations with Russia.

The disjointed fragments of this unhappy kingdom, then, are supposed to contain about 20,000,000 of people, of whom 4,298,962, including upwards of 213,000 Jews, are natives of Russian Poland. The state of cultivation is extremely wretched, though the soil is productive and the climate regular. The peasantry are poor, dirty, improvident, lazy, and, like the same class of Russians, given to drunkenness. Of course, the aspect of the country is rude and backward, the roads wretched, and the inns miserable.* Once, previous to A. D. 1667, the present kingdom of Poland is said to have contained 16,000,000 of inhabitants. This is, we believe, a very great exaggeration; but, considering the distracted state of the country, and the turmoils in which it has been involved, the decrease must have been very great.

Before the year 1772, Poland, the most extensive level country in Europe, contained, together with Lithuania, 11,500,000 inhabitants,

* Encyclopædia Americana, and a hundred other authorities.

at the utmost, who, under upwards of 200,000 petty masters, derived as little advantage from the nominal freedom of the miscalled *republic* as from the fertility of the soil. Industry was torpid; the whip of the Polish noble, as of every other slave-driver, was its only stimulus; Jew and Gentile drowned sorrow in *aqua vitæ*, together; for their common sentiment and saying was, "Only what I drink is mine." Wolves and wild beasts, though fierce and many, were the least of the nation's nuisances.

An able writer observes of this people that, in their struggles, without beginning or end, with the Goths, and Huns, and Germans, and in their internal broils, they had acquired a wonderful elasticity of character, compounded of obstinacy and pliancy, of defiance and submission, of servility and national pride. They received Christianity and letters late in the tenth century, and were then first called *Poles*. They were ever at war with their neighbors, and with each other, with no other bond of union among them than a common reigning family (the Piasts) and a common name. Broken into petty principalities, like all tribes of barbarians, without laws or freedom, their history is not worth tracing; and, the pretended civilization and learning of both nations to the contrary notwithstanding, Poland was in a no more respectable condition than Ireland under Rory O'Connor and Dermot McMurrough. The tree of liberty stood without roots, till it was overthrown. There could be no more real freedom in an elective monarchy or republic, call it by what name we may, where the noble only was a citizen, than in Russia, where noble and serf were alike slaves; or in Georgia and South Carolina, where a like barbarous and unnat-

ural state of society prevails. Such a many-headed monster as such a state, never can live long without external support.

Successively deprived of the Oder, Silesia, the Baltic, the Dnieper and the Carpathian range, — its natural defences, — and devoid of the self-contained strength of cohesion, Poland has always been a prey to foreigners. We should as soon think of recording the squabbles of kites and crows as the early history of its early convulsions, which neutralized even the effect of Christianity. The line of the Piasts expired with its last and best prince, Casimir, surnamed, by the descendants of his subjects, — if such a term, as applied to them, is not a misnomer, — for his wise endeavors to create social order, "the Great." Even he was compelled to yield portions of his territory to the Germans.

The patriots of Poland then began to barter their votes, as they have continued to do ever since, for personal privileges and advantages, at the expense of their country. Who were the bidders, and what were the bids for the Polish crown, it were needless and useless to say; suffice it, that it passed to the Jagellons, dukes of Lithuania, by election and marriage. United with Lithuania, a country speaking a different language and professing a different religion, (not Christianity,) the nobility of both states, with that of Great and Little Poland, constituted one diet, and became the most powerful state in the north. Still, the succession was matter of bargain and sale, and the nobles engrossed the entire representation, to the exclusion of the people. They appeared at the diet by nuncios or deputies from the several districts; without whose consent no change could be made in the constitution of the state.

The era of the Jagellons was the palmiest day of Poland. There being no such thing in the kingdom as a people, or third class, to hold the balance of power between the king and the nobles, the monarch had no alternative, but to do as all kings, of all nations, have done, or tried to do, in like circumstances — to make the government a perfect despotism. Need we ask the reader to recur to the despotism of Nadir Shah, of the Tudors and the Capets? Need we speak of the struggles of the monarchs of Spain with their nobles, to show that such is the inevitable condition of a land where the people have no rights? Many kings of Poland, in after times, attempted to reduce the nobles; but there was no Henry Tudor, no Peter Alexiowitsch, among them. Moreover, they lacked the only arms by which a powerful aristocracy can be effectually subdued — wealth and a standing army. Then, as in the late insurrection, the aristocracy was the army, and the army was the aristocracy; and it disposed of the revenues at its pleasure. "The king was a puppet, and the people ciphers."

After the last of the Jagellons, Poland again became an elective — what shall we call it? a monarchy, where the crown was a bought bauble? or a republic, where the great mass of the people had no representation, and no portion in the commonwealth but air, water, and servitude? The nobles convened in mass, and conferred the crown on Henry of Anjou, of the blood royal of France, who accepted it with regret, at the command of his brother, Charles IX. Whether it was obtained for him by bribery, or whether jealousy of each other prompted the nobles in their choice, we shall not inquire; either cause has seated foreigners on the throne of Poland, a score of times. Nay, it seems

very probable that a less wealthy Jew than either of the Rothschilds might have bought the nobility almost at any time. Henry first swore to the *pacta conventa*, or magna charta, of the Polish nobility, at his coronation — nearly the same coronation oath that was administered down to the triple partition. It made the crown elective, required the convocation of the diet once in two years, and deprived the king of all active power. It contained one good thing, however; it bound him to perfect toleration in religion. Henry absconded from Poland within the year, to escape the degrading honor thrust upon him.

The attempts of the Swede Sigismund, the next foreigner called to the throne, to unite the two kingdoms of the north, procured Poland the advantages of thirty years' foreign and civil war, and of a law (enacted by the diet in 1609) authorizing and legalizing rebellion and insurrection, the great available pretext of Polish patriotism to this day.

The very pretexts of a bond of Polish union, and a Polish form of government, were renounced in 1614, in the reign of John Casimir, when the nobles willed themselves the *liberum veto*, by which an individual deputy could negative the votes of all the rest; equivalent to making Judge Lynch speaker and dictator of the diet, in which a deputy could only vote (sometimes literally) sword in hand, and at the peril of his life. Intimidation was the settled policy of the majority.

It is related, in illustration of the freedom of debate, and the personal sanctity conferred on the members of the diet by the *liberum veto*, that, on one occasion, a stubborn deputy concealed himself in the large empty Russian stove that stood in the representative hall, to veto a contemplated law.

Had he appeared openly, he might have been silenced before he had an opportunity to utter a syllable. As it was, he thrust out his head; but it left his body before the words had time to leave his lips, obedient to the ready sabre's edge of a brother deputy.

After the death of the great Sobieski, whose wisdom and valor for a while delayed its downfall, the crown of Poland was openly sold to the highest bidder. When Augustus II., elector of Saxony, and king, by purchase and force, of Poland, was compelled to seek protection from his own nobles, in the arms of Russia, the fate of Poland was decided. It is impossible to imagine a class of men more unredeemedly corrupt than the Polish oligarchy of that period. The Swedes did then, and without in the least exciting the sympathy of other nations in favor of Poland, what the Russians did afterwards; they disposed of the Polish crown.

At the diets of 1733 and 1736, the Lutheran dissidents were made personally incapable of the office of deputy, deprived of access to all courts of justice, excluded from all civil offices, and put on a footing with the privileged Jews; at the same time it was made high treason for them to seek foreign protection. Corruption was universal and absolute, and, moreover, in a high state of fermentation when the weak Poniatowski came to the throne. This man (king he can scarcely be called) sought the protection of Russia against the rebellious pride of his nobles, and thereby, it is to be hoped for the benefit of liberty and humanity, extinguished the oligarchy forever; for it is sarcasm to call it either a kingdom or a republic.

To illustrate the condition of Poland down to the reign of Stanislas Augustus Poniatowski, we

cannot do better than quote the undenied and undeniable account of Voltaire;—though even that most concise and nervous of historians gives us but a faint idea of the misery and abjection of that unhappy land.

"Poland is a little larger, but less populous, than France. Its inhabitants have been Christians only about seven hundred years.* This great country is very fertile; but its people are, therefore, only the lazier. The mechanics and traders to be found in Poland are Scotch, Frenchmen, and, above all, Jews, who have about three hundred synagogues, and will be driven thence on account of their multiplication, as they have been from Spain. They buy the corn, cattle, and provisions, of the country at a low rate, to barter at Dantzic, and in Germany; and sell dearly to the nobles the means of such luxury as they love and are acquainted with. Thus this country, watered by the noblest rivers, rich in pasturage and salt mines, and clothed with harvests, remains poor, in spite of its abundance, because the people are *slaves*, and the nobles are proud and ignorant.

"Its government is the most faithful copy of the old Gothic and Celtic governments, corrupted, or corrected, throughout, however. It is the only state that has retained the name of a republic together with the royal dignity.

"Every gentleman has a vote in the election of the king, and may be king himself. This most precious of rights is coupled with the greatest abuses; the throne is almost always at auction, and, as a Pole is rarely rich enough to buy it, it has often been sold to foreigners. The nobles

* Voltaire wrote a century ago.

and clergy defend their liberty from the king, and deprive the rest of the nation of theirs. The people are all slaves; so true is it that it is every where the fate of man, that, in one way or another, the greater number shall be subjugated by the less. There, the peasant sows not for himself, but for a lord, to whom he, and his grounds, and the labor of his hands belong, and who may sell or slaughter him with the beasts of the field. Every one of noble birth is accountable only to the nobility: an entire assembly of the nation is requisite to try him on a criminal charge; he cannot be apprehended till after condemnation, and, therefore, punishment seldom or never takes place. There are many poor nobles, who enter the service of the more powerful, receive their wages, and perform the lowest offices — preferring to serve their equals to enriching themselves by trade; and they style themselves electors of kings and destroyers of tyrants, while they curry their masters' horses!*

"He who should behold a king of Poland in the pomp of his regal majesty, would take him for the most absolute prince in Europe; and yet he is the least so. The Poles, indeed, enter with him into the contract that is supposed to exist between prince and subject in other countries. Even at his coronation, while swearing to the *pacta conventa*, he absolves his subjects of their oath of allegiance, in case he should break the laws of the republic.

"He nominates all officers, and confers all honors. Nothing is hereditary in Poland, but lands and the rank of noble. The son of a king, or a palatine, has no claim to the dignity of his father; but there is this great difference between the king

* Does not this account for the ease with which a Polish army is raised, or an insurrection *got up?*

and the republic; the king can take away no office after having conferred it; whereas the republic can take away his crown, if he transgresses the laws of the state.

"The nobles, jealous of their liberty, often sell their votes;—but their love, rarely. Scarcely have they elected a king, when they dread his ambition, and oppose him with their cabals. The men he has made great, and cannot unmake, often become his enemies, instead of remaining his creatures. Those attached to the court are hated by the rest of the nobility; and thus there are always two parties—the inevitable, and, indeed, necessary division of a country that will have liberty and kings too.

"Whatever concerns the nation is settled in the assembly of the general estates, called the *diet*. These estates are constituted of the senate and a number of gentlemen. The senators are palatines and bishops: the second order is composed of deputies from the several palatine diets. The archbishop of Gnesne, primate of Poland, vicar of the kingdom in case of interregnum, and first person in it next to the king, presides in these great assemblies. It is seldom that there is another cardinal in Poland; because, as the Roman purple gives no precedence in the senate, a cardinal-bishop would be obliged either to sit in his place as senator, or to renounce the solid privileges of his dignity in his own country, to maintain the pretensions of a foreign rank.

"By the laws of the kingdom, these diets should be alternately held in Poland and Lithuania. The deputies often settle their affairs in them sabre in hand,* like the ancient Sarmatians, their fore-

* This pugnacity may account for the sympathies of our members of Congress with the Poles

fathers; and sometimes even in the midst of drunkenness, a vice of which the Sarmatians were ignorant. Every gentleman deputed to these general estates enjoys the right the tribunes of the people had, in Rome, of opposing the laws of the senate. By saying, *I protest*, a single gentleman frustrates the unanimous resolutions of all the rest, and, if he leaves the place where the diet is held, it must then separate.

"The remedy applied to the evils that arise from this law is more dangerous still. Rarely is Poland without two factions. Unanimity in diets being, therefore, impossible, each party forms a confederation, in which questions are carried by the plurality of voices, without regard to the remonstrances of the minority. These assemblies, illegal by the laws, but sanctioned by custom, are held in the king's name, though often against his will, and contrary to his interests; much as the League in France made use of the name of Henry III. to overwhelm him, and as the Parliament of England, who beheaded Charles I. upon a scaffold, began by putting his name to every resolution they made for his destruction. When the troubles are over, it belongs to the general diets to confirm, or annul, the acts of these confederations. A diet may even change all that the diet preceding has done, for the same reason by which, in a monarchical state, a king may abolish the laws of his predecessor, and his own.

"The nobility, who make the laws of the republic, also constitute its force. They take horse on great occasions, and may compose a body of more than a hundred thousand men. This great army, called the *pospolite*, moves with difficulty, and is ill governed. The difficulty of procuring subsist-

ence and forage makes it impossible for it to hold long together; and discipline, subordination, and experience, are lacking; but the love of liberty (liberty!) that animates it renders it always formidable.

"It may be beaten, or dispersed, or, for a while, enslaved; but it soon shakes off the yoke. The pospolite compare themselves to reeds, bowed down by the tempest, that rise as soon as the wind ceases to blow. For that reason it is, that they have no fortified places; they desire to be the only ramparts of their republic; they never suffer their king to build fortresses, for fear he should use them, less to defend, than to oppress them. Their country is every where open, with the exception of two or three frontier places, — so that if, in their civil or foreign wars, they ever persist in standing a siege, they are obliged to throw up earthen fortifications in a hurry, to repair old, half-ruined walls, to deepen ditches almost filled up; and the city is taken before the intrenchments are completed.

"The pospolite are not constantly mounted in defence of the country; they get to horse only by command of the diet, or, in extreme dangers, sometimes at the king's simple order.

"The ordinary defence of Poland is an army always to be kept on foot at the expense of the republic. It consists of two bodies, under two different grand generals. The first corps is the army of Poland, and should consist of thirty-six thousand men; the second, to the number of twelve thousand, is the army of Lithuania. The two grand generals are independent of each other. Albeit appointed by the king, they render an account of their operations only to the republic, and their authority over their troops is supreme. The colonels

are absolute masters of their regiments: it is their business to maintain them as they can, and to pay them; but, being rarely paid themselves, they ravage the country, and ruin the cultivators, to gratify their own rapacity and their soldiers'. The Polish lords live more magnificently with these armies than in the cities; their tents are handsomer than their houses. The cavalry, which constitutes two thirds of the army, consists almost wholly of gentlemen, and is remarkable for the beauty of its horses and the richness of its dresses and harnesses.

"The gendarmes, above all, who are distinguished as hussars and pancernes, never stir unaccompanied by several valets with led horses, decorated with silver, plated, and studded bridles, embroidered saddles, gilded saddlebows and stirrups, and sometimes solid silver ones, and wide, trailing housings, after the fashion of the Turks, whose splendor the Poles imitate as much as they can.

"The infantry is as ill appointed, ill clad, and ill armed, as the cavalry is ornate and superb; without regular uniform, or aught else; such, at least, it was till about the year 1710. These foot-soldiers, who resemble vagabond Tartars, endure cold, hunger, fatigue, and all the weight of the war, with incredible fortitude.

"The character of the ancient Sarmatians, their ancestors, may still be observed in the Polish soldiers — the same fury in attack, the same promptitude in flight and return to battle, the same rage of slaughter when victorious."

Such was, in brief, the history, such the government, condition, and character, such the liberty of a people whom the world pities for having been conquered, by no means for the first time, and for having lost their freedom by coming under the

three strong and settled governments of Russia, Austria, and Prussia! We contend that such pity and such sympathy are misplaced and wasted; as much so as our pity for Texas, when deprived by Mexico of the privilege, or liberty, to perpetuate and extend negro slavery. None of their wars, or their rebellions, have been for national freedom; on the contrary, they have almost always been for the slavery of the many, and the tyranny of the few. The people, properly so called, took no part in them; and, as one master, however despotic and arbitrary, is preferable to a hundred thousand, we maintain that Poland is far better off under Nicholas, and would be, under any government strong enough to hold her quiet, than she ever was under any of her own kings. She was not robbed of freedom; for she never had it; and, at the time of the second partition, her condition had come to that pass that no change could have made it worse. We cannot imagine a more deplorable state of affairs, in a country professing civilization and Christianity, than that of Poland when she was a nation. Where was there ever seen, elsewhere, a country of slaves; a prey to anarchy, murder, and misrule; where God was not feared or man regarded; without laws, or, worse, with only such laws as were neither respected nor enforced; where life was not safe, and property was of no value; without any one thing that makes fatherland dear to man; too weak to defend itself, and owing its separate existence only to the quarrels of its neighbors, and to the equal barbarism of another nation, whose regenerated existence has, at last, swallowed it up? Never, since the creation of the world, was misery seen equal to Poland's; not even in Morocco, in the reign of Muley Ismael; for he, at least, had a monopoly of oppression and murder.

We do not say that all this is to be taken without any qualification. We know that there was learning among the Polish aristocracy, and valor, and such patriotism as abhors the idea of submission to foreign dictation; such patriotic indignation as the Thugs felt, when suppressed by the British, in India. We know that there were brilliant periods in Polish history, — as, for example, when the great genius of John Sobieski would have redeemed his country from contempt and barbarism, had it been redeemable. We know that the yoke of Poland was, at different periods, felt by other nations, when they were shrouded in a night as dark as her own. But we advise all sympathizers whom the Polish Propaganda have deluded with fairy tales of the old-world glories and freedom of Poland, just as Irish antiquarians babble of the civilization of Ireland in the times of Brian Boroihme and Milesius, to read history, and bless God that they are not the inheritors from Polish fathers. Happy had it been for Poland had she produced a Peter Alexiowitsch, or even a Nadir Shah, ten centuries ago; happier is it for her that she has a Nicholas now, instead of a King Adam Czartoryski and a revived oligarchy!

During the thirty years' peaceful reign of Augustus III., the pospolite almost wholly lost what efficacy it ever had. It neglected all military exercises, and became a mere inert mass, without arms, discipline, or subordination, and alike incapable of obedience or command. In this reign arose the conspiracy, or plot, or whatever it may be called, that has never since been abandoned, of the Czartoryskis, to overthrow the republic and establish monarchy.* It was frustrated by the real patriot-

* Rulhiere.

ism of Grand General Count Branicki, the most powerful person in Poland, who very justly preferred peace under one form of government, bad as it was, to any change likely to be brought about by English intrigue and private Polish ambition.

Stanislas Poniatowski, — the Manuel Godoy of Poland, — by God's blessing the last of the Polish kings, on whose fate so much ink and so many tears have been expended, was as much a patriot and hero as Miss Porter's "Thaddeus of Warsaw" was an historical personage. He was a mere elegant, weak, selfish sensualist and voluptuary, the creature of the Czartoryskis, and the favorite of Catherine II., whose favor he won by his personal accomplishments, and was raised by her power and influence to the throne. Nor are Catherine's ambitious views on Poland so much to be blamed as they usually are. She may be in some degree excused for giving away what did not belong to her, viz., the Polish crown, when we consider that Prince Czartoryski first sent his emissary to her, for such Poniatowski then was, to beg it as a fief. Catherine must have been more disinterested and conscientious than any other European monarch, excepting Charles XII., has ever been, to disclaim a supremacy so admitted. And it is the son and representative of this very Czartoryski, who laid down his country's national independence on the altar of personal ambition, who now calls on Christendom to help him to shake off the yoke his father voluntarily put on, and to restore what that father threw away.*

* Augustus Czartoryski was palatine of Polish Russia; had acquired great wealth by marriage, and had thousands of followers, who looked up to him as their sovereign. He had all the power, and none of the virtues or talents, of Warwick, the English kingmaker.

His brother Michael was a designing statesman, and con-

The conduct of Catherine is by no means without a precedent in European history. It has a perfect parallel in the course taken by Edward I., of whom John Baliol offered to hold the crown of Scotland as a fief. Edward did not hesitate to accept it; but there was this difference in the two cases. The Scottish nation were not Poles. A man of the people raised the people in resistance; that people were vassals, but not slaves; and Edward, as able, and, comparatively speaking, as powerful a prince as Catherine, died at Burgh upon Sands, without having effected his object.

An idea of the character of the last king of this unfortunate republic, as it is strangely called, may be gathered from a single historical fact. Catherine's letter, announcing her husband's death and her own accession, found him in bed. The messenger also brought him a picture, representing the empress on both sides of him, painted as Bellona and Minerva. Frantic with delight, Poniatowski sprang from his couch, and alternately poured forth his thanksgiving to Heaven and the pictures. Such a man was a fit sovereign for a people who, as an historian by no means inimical to them remarks, "had too long degraded themselves in the scale of nations, to be able much to resent an insult."

When the first Russian army was obliged, by Prince Radzivil, and the khan of the Tartars of the Crimea, to retire from the territory of Poland, the unfortunate royal patriot, Stanislas Poniatowski, wept that his traitorous designs were frustrated. "Your ambition misleads you," said the venerable

summate intriguer, and grand chancellor of Lithuania. It is recorded that he numbered upwards of a hundred thousand nobles on his list of friends and partisans. The Czartoryskis were a branch of the Jagellons.

Branicki; "it is conducting you to slavery; and perhaps your greatest success will only serve to mark the epoch of the entire destruction of your country." Poniatowski answered only with tears, and invectives against his opponents, and Branicki never spoke to him again.

A question here arises: Did Catherine grasp the crown of Poland as a fief of her own motion, or did she act at the instigation of the Czartoryskis, who thought to use her as a tool, and did so, at the expense of their own fingers? We shall see.

When the diet opened to elect a king, in 1764, Poniatowski came into the senate with a Russian guard; the chamber was filled with Catherine's soldiers. But eight senators out of fifty were there; and the Marshal Mokranowski, whose duty it was, as marshal of the previous diet, to open the session, did not make his appearance till he had registered, in the very building thus occupied, a protest against the legality of the overawed diet. He entered the chamber only officially to suspend the authority of the diet, as being under Russian duress; whereupon several of the soldiers made a rush at the bold patriot, to cut him down, and he was obliged to draw his sword in his own defence. "What, gentlemen!" said he to the deputies who wore the Czartoryski badge, "do the deputies of the country wear the livery of a family?

"Gentlemen, since liberty no longer exists among us," said the old marshal, then over eighty, "I carry away this staff, and I will never raise it till the republic is delivered from her troubles."* Again

* Raising the staff was the sign that the diet was opened.

the weapons of the soldiers were raised. "Strike," shouted he, throwing himself before the old man, "strike! I shall die free, and in the cause of liberty!" His enemies paused, and commanded the marshal to resign the staff. "You may cut off my hand, or take my life," he replied; "but I am marshal, elected by a free people, and I can only be deposed by a free people. I shall retire." It was with the utmost difficulty and peril that he was enabled to do so.

Eighty nobles, then, of the three hundred who should have been present, constituted themselves a diet, and elected Prince Adam Czartoryski marshal, in defiance of law, custom, patriotism, right, and justice, and proceeded to proscribe all the leading constitutionalists. It was then that the independence of Poland was, not crushed by Russia, but basely trampled on and cast away by Poles. The extinction of Poland dates from that day, not from the triple partition; and who shall say that Catherine was the prime author of the wrong, if wrong there were?

We reverence the character of such Poles as Mokranowski and Branicki; we admire the enthusiastic valor they displayed in their unavailing struggles; but — the truth must out — it was not for the people they fought; the mass had no interest in the quarrel; we never hear, in Polish history, of a rising of the laboring classes.

In 1764, four thousand nobles only, out of the usual number of eighty thousand, consummated the election of Stanislas Poniatowski. The coronation diet, by the direction of the Czartoryskis, made the constitution virtually monarchical, and decreed two statues to Augustus and Michael Czartoryski. On

the same night placards were posted with this inscription —

"ERECT TWO GIBBETS, THEIR FIT MONUMENTS!"*

Upwards of twenty thousand Russian troops were scattered over Poland to maintain Stanislas upon the throne.

The Roman Catholic was the predominant religion in Poland. We have already seen that the dissident nobles had been deprived of all personal share in the government, though they could still send deputies to the diet. They applied to the election and coronation diets for redress; but their petition was treated with contempt, and their condition rendered worse than before. They then invoked, and obtained, the protection of Catherine.

Whatever may be thought of the propriety of her interference, there can be but one opinion of the justice of her sentiments.

The Northern States of the Union complain of the "gag law."

"It would be shutting one's eyes to proofs, not to admit as a principle, that the constant refusal to listen to their representations, and to do justice to their grievances, must necessarily produce the effect of freeing them from their ties to an association in whose advantages they would no longer participate; and that, restored fully to the condition of the community of freemen, they will be authorized (without any law, divine or human, forbidding such a step in their case) to choose among their neighbors judges between them and their equals, and to avail themselves of their alliance if they cannot in any other way defend themselves from persecution."

Here we once more see arbitrary power enlisted

* Solignac.

in favor of indestructible rights. Stanislas, after a great deal of hesitation, declared that he "was determined to *defend his holy religion*," which was not attacked; and the Polish nobles, so dead to the honor and interest of their country, were, heart and hand, unanimous in the cause of oppression and intolerance.

On this occasion, and for the first time, we find mention made, in Polish history, of peasants and artisans counting for any thing in the scale of society, and now only because the dissenting nobles were too few to form a party by themselves.

The war broke out. Catherine had used the Poniatowski, or rather the Czartoryski party, as her tools; and now that they had become useless, she broke and flung them away. She sided with the constitutionalists. On the other hand, France supported the traitorous party. Foreigners laid waste the land, and the lawless conduct of the Polish chiefs themselves excited such contempt of the real rights of the Poles among their neighbors, that, as Catherine said, they deemed Poland "a country where it was only necessary to stoop, to pick up something." On this feeling was founded the triple partition of 1773, the death-blow of Polish independence. When the Polish bishop of Kamieniac applied to the grand vizier, Mahomet Emin, for aid against the Russians, through the ambassador Polocki, he replied with equal truth and good sense, "He thinks we are not acquainted with our own history. Tell him that the Porte remembers how often it has had reason to complain of the Poles. He imagines that he is treating here with a Christian power, accustomed to sport with truth and falsehood. Do you know," he added, turning to his officers, "what these people call their liberty? It is the right of living without laws."

It seems to us as if the Almighty, to demonstrate the evils of oligarchy to Poland and the world, had suffered the great bulk of the Polish aristocracy to attain the lowest depth of political corruption and debasement, and then, to cap the climax, and to show that there was a lower deep still, had, in his wrath, created the Czartoryski party to make it contemptible and odious; the whole to be swept away, at last, by his instruments, the Russians, who spared the Polish *people*, because they had suffered, not sinned.

Thus that abominable people, the ancient Israelites, were chosen to exterminate the Midianites, and Amalekites, and other offending tribes, in Canaan; and, probably, a ferocious, sanguinary race were made executioners, as the better fitted for the work;

Thus Attila punished the degeneracy of the Roman empire;

Thus Tarik and Muza ben Noseir chastised the Goths, and renovated Spain;

And, as there is more honey made when the drones and vermin are driven from the hive; as, when the taller weeds are mowed, the grass gets more light and air; so Poland, now that her aristocracy are driven away, or deprived of their power to do injury, may in time awaken from the debasement of ages;

Just as awakened Russia, when the Emperor Nicholas, or his successor, shall have accomplished the design nearest his heart, and the grand object of his life, (viz., the abolition of slavery in his dominions,) will rank with the most favored country God's smile ever lighted and warmed.

If we could, as the world has hitherto done, confound the aristocratic Polish party, who warred

against Catherine in the last, and Nicholas in the present century, with the Polish nation; if we could delude ourself into the belief that they warred for their country, and not exclusively for their order; no heart would more deeply feel for their misfortunes, no voice would praise their patriotism, more warmly than ours; but it was not so. They sought an accomplice in Catherine, and they found a mistress. Their downfall was the commencement of the preparation of Poland for liberty; their war, in its best aspect, was not for freedom, but only for independence; their patriotism was the patriotism of the barons who, little dreaming of its consequences to their vassals and villeins, extorted *Magna Charta* from King John, on the 19th of June, 1215; the patriotism of the Douglasses, the Scotts, and the Gordons, when they made their king a puppet, and his kingdom one wide battle-field and grave-yard for each to maintain his own unjust pretensions, or to bury those of his rivals in.

We are sensible that, whatever the faults or disorganization of Poland may have been, it affords no justification of its partition. We offer no excuse or apology for it; for it admits of none. No man has the right to assume the guardianship of another, on the score of that other's general bad character, though the guardianship may be a benefit to the individual and to society at large. The same reasoning will apply to nations. But we deny that an individual, or nation, whose condition is compulsorily changed for the better, or who is forcibly rendered incapable of injuring him or itself, and others, is entitled to any sympathy or pity. The Polish aristocracy had sufficient warning of their danger, arising from causes within their own control; but they took no measures to avert or

meet it while it was yet time. They were deaf to the experience of centuries, speaking trumpet-tongued. "Suspension of the liberty of the diets, foreign encroachments, and the seizure of the principal men of the nation," are the three principal complaints set forth in their manifestoes. Did they ever have a free diet? What use did they make of such liberty, when they had it? How often did they invite foreign encroachment, that of Russia in particular? How many, and what proportion of their principal men, deserved to be suffered to go at large? Pity them!—as well may we pity the Quaker who is beaten and robbed because he will not defend himself. The Polish aristocracy were not rebels; no! they owed no allegiance to Russia, Prussia, or Austria. Neither are robbers and rioters rebels; but we do not pity them when overtaken by the consequences of their misconduct, folly, or crimes. Pity them! as well may we pity France for her loss of life and property in St. Domingo; or the planters of Jamaica for the compelled emancipation of their slaves; or Great Britain for the loss of her thirteen colonies. Rather let us rejoice that they are now constrained to live by their own exertions, instead of the labors of their serfs.

Before John Casimir gave up the Polish crown for a cowl, he uttered this prophecy before the diet: "I hope I may be a false prophet in stating that you have to fear the dismemberment of the republic. The Russians will attempt to seize the grand duchy of Lithuania, as far as the rivers Bug and Narew, and almost to the Vistula. The elector of Brandelburg will have a design on Greater Poland and the neighboring palatinates, and will contend for the aggrandizement of both Prussias.

The house of Austria will turn its attention to Cracow, and the adjacent palatinates."

Wearied and worn out by the everlasting annoyance of his factious nobles, the great Sobieski thus addressed the senate: "Believe me, all your tribunitial eloquence would be better employed against those who, by their factions, invoke upon our country that cry of the prophet which I seem, alas! already to hear resounding over our heads: 'Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed!'"

Stanislas Leszczynski, who had himself been their king, exhorted the nobility to open their eyes, in vain. "I reflect with dread upon the perils that surround us," said the dethroned philosopher. "What force have we to resist our neighbors? what foundation for this extreme confidence, that keeps us chained, and, as it were, slumbering in disgraceful repose? Do we trust to the faith of treaties? How many examples have we of the frequent neglect of even the most solemn agreements! We imagine that our neighbors are interested in our preservation, by their mutual jealousy — a vain prejudice, that deceives us; ridiculous infatuation, that formerly cost the Hungarians their liberty; and which will surely deprive us of ours, if, depending on such a frivolous hope, we continue unarmed. Our turn will come, no doubt. Either we shall become the prey of some famous conqueror, or, perhaps, *even the neighboring powers will combine to divide our states.*"

The confederate Poles awoke too late to their past folly and their true policy, and undertook to form a new constitution, by which the elective republican monarchy and the *liberum veto* were abolished, *and the third estate admitted to a share*

of the national representation; but the serfs were not emancipated, though their bondage was made lighter. This was the basis of the constitution of May 3, 1791, approved by Prussia, and rejected by Russia — why? Because the kingdom of Poland had become, *de facto*, part and parcel of Russia, by the right of the strongest; because to have granted it would have been granting to an acquisition of the empire what had never been, and could not well be, granted to the empire itself; because it would have been conceding a right denied to the empire, which was not ripe for it; and because it would have been a dangerous precedent, at the time of the French revolution.

How comes it that Austria and Prussia, though equally concerned with Russia in the partition of Poland, and much more shamefully, too, (inasmuch as they were not invited by any Polish party to meddle with the affairs of the nation,) are almost overlooked by sympathizers, while Russia engrosses the whole volume of their indignation? How comes it that Russia alone is reproached with all the calamities of the war that ensued after this constitution was framed, though that war is wholly attributable to the perfidy of Frederic William? If he had not approved that constitution, and promised to support it, its framers never would have risked the step. He abandoned them to their fate the next year, saying that they had done wrong to adopt a constitution he had never intended to support, without his knowledge and coöperation; and this after instructing his ambassador at Warsaw to present "to the king, the marshals of the diet, and all those who had contributed to such an important work, his sincere congratulations, in the most solemn manner, on the important step he admired, applauded,

and considered essential to consolidate the nation's welfare."

"O, bloodiest picture in the book of time!
Sarmatia fell unwept, without a crime.
Hope for a moment bade the world farewell,
And Freedom shrieked, when Kosciusco fell."

So sings the poet, with some poetry and no truth. It would be difficult to say, it would require a fervid imagination to guess, what political crime Sarmatia had not been in the habit of committing, or what reason any man, who loves his kind, had to weep for her. Freedom would have, indeed, shrieked her death-note, in Poland, and Hope might have bade its people farewell, forever, had Kosciusco and his party prevailed. In 1780, the really patriotic chancellor, Zamoyski, laid before the diet the code he had been instructed to prepare. It recommended the abolition of the kingly election, and the *liberum veto;* and, far more important, the emancipation of the serfs, and the elevation of the trading classes to the elective franchise. The chancellor set the example himself, by emancipating his own serfs, and was followed by Stanislas Poniatowski, the king's nephew, and a few other nobles; but the rest of the patriotic champions of freedom, at whose defeat Hope bade the world farewell, scouted the proposal, and pronounced Zamoyski a traitor. He might as well have counselled our southern brethren to give their slaves an interest in the welfare of their country.

Deprived of his kingdom, Stanislas Poniatowski was sent to Grodno, and compelled to abdicate. Even he has found the sympathizing commiseration he by no one act of his worse than useless life deserved. He received an annual pension of two hundred thousand ducats, and his debts were paid;

had justice been done him, they would have been quitted with a halter.

Catherine's successor, Paul, treated the defeated Poles with distinguished clemency. He set Kosciusco at liberty, offered him a high rank in his army, and gave him twelve thousand rubles and fifteen hundred serfs. All the other Poles whom Catherine had left in prison were freed, and those who had been sent to Siberia were permitted to return to their homes, to the number of twelve thousand. Frederic William followed Paul's example in Prussia. Austria, on the contrary, treated the exiles with great severity; whence their eagerness to join the French army of Italy under Bonaparte.

It is not true, as Alison asserts, that Poland owed her decline and fall to having "retained the equality and independence of savage life." Poland never knew aught like equality. Her government has ever been that anomaly, an unmitigated oligarchy, the members of which constituted a wild democracy, in the most licentious sense of the word, among themselves; of such fierce and stubborn republicans, as, in our Southern States, lord it over helots. It was a nation without a people, a government of checks to power without any power to be checked. The Poles, that is, the Polish nobility, were a brave and warlike people, — all semi-savages are, — but their false equality produced its natural results; they were the only warlike nation, engaged in perpetual civil and foreign strife, to whom victory never added strength, peace, or increase. Their democracy was as pernicious as their domestic tyranny: they knew no liberty but licentiousness, and nothing of government but its weakness. They drank the bitter consequences of a pitiless aristocracy, and a senseless, insane equal-

ity, to the dregs, and it was right that they should — humanity is the better for it. Even Alison, with all his sympathy, all his efforts to make out a justification, or apology, for Poland, gives up the case in despair.

After the battle of Jena, where Prussia was laid prostrate, Napoleon availed himself of the hatred of the Poles to Russia to call on them to shake off the yoke; and with considerable success. The pospolite took the field with the French troops, and the allies were subdued at Friedland; but the only result of the war, so far as it concerned Poland, was, that that part of her territory which had been under the dominion of Prussia was erected into an independent government by the treaty of Tilsit, with the title of grand duchy of Warsaw, and with the king of Saxony for its grand duke. The population of the grand duchy was about four millions. A commission was appointed by Napoleon to frame a constitution for it, which he approved. It did more for the *people* of Prussian Poland than they had ever thought of doing for themselves. It abolished slavery, instituted a diet of *two* legislative chambers, and vested the executive power in the king. The diet raised an army, and introduced the code of Napoleon.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GRAND DUCHY OF WARSAW.—THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER.—THE KINGDOM AND CONSTITUTION OF POLAND.—CONSPIRACY AGAINST RUSSIA.—ABDICATION OF THE GRAND DUKE CONSTANTINE.

In the war which immediately followed with Austria, the Poles of the duchy, under Poniatowski, drove the Austrians out of Gallicia; but, at the treaty of Vienna, after the battle of Wagram, only four of the departments of the conquest were added to the duchy, while the circles of Tarnapol and Zbazaz were ceded to Russia.

From this time to 1812, the grand duchy of Warsaw, notwithstanding its accession of territory, was by no means an independent state. The grand duke was a vassal of Napoleon, and the duchy, too weak to defend itself, was therefore a dependency on France. "Nothing," says M. De Pradt, "could exceed the misery of all classes. The army was not paid, the officers were in rags, the best houses were in ruins, and the greatest lords were obliged to leave Warsaw for want of money to provide for their tables." Still, the Poles hoped on, believing that Napoleon meant to restore their ancient kingdom; and the duchy of Warsaw raised seventy thousand men for the Russian campaign.

While such was the enthusiasm in what had been Prussian and Austrian Poland, far different was the feeling that had been created by Russian rule in Lithuania. Alexander treated the Lithuanians as subjects, not slaves. They were not deprived of

their privileges, nor were their taxes raised; their laws underwent little change, and they had the appointment of most of their own officers. Alexander evinced the utmost anxiety for their welfare, prepared a liberal frame of government for them, and even proposed to erect Lithuania into a separate kingdom. "Do not forget the peasants," he said to the officer whom he had instructed to prepare a code of laws; "they are the most useful class, and your serfs have always been treated like helots."

"These words," says a sympathetic English historical writer,* "sound strangely in a Russian despot's mouth, particularly when we remember the state of the Russian serfs."

Why so? This Russian, though he had the good or evil fortune, as the reader may deem it, to be born to the awful responsibility of absolute authority over more than sixty millions of people,—this despot was a man of the mildest, most amiable, and most humane character, even by the showing of his most inveterate enemies, the aristocratic Poles. "Poland may have suffered under Alexander," says Hordynski, a Pole, and one of the most passionate and prejudiced writers who ever put pen to paper; "yet he loved the nation as a friend, which every one of my countrymen will allow. When he was mistaken in his measures, the reason was that, surrounded by bad men and enemies of our nation, he was prevented from knowing the truth. Poland forgave him all his faults, in the grateful recollection that he had restored her to a separate existence, and respected the constitution." Alexander, with a benignant countenance, permitted every one freely

* Fletcher, of whose compilation the Harpers' History of Poland is a mere abridgment.

to approach him, and his features were never distorted with passion.

This despot, according to the same patriotic writer, "in the first moments after entering upon the government of the kingdom, seemed disposed to load Poland with benefits. He was received by the inhabitants of Warsaw with the most unfeigned good-will, and his stay in that city was distinguished by acts of beneficence. The words with which he then addressed the representatives of the nation are still in the memory of every Pole."

Yet, in the same breath, this querulous chronicler complains that the emperor appointed the veteran General Zajaczek, a Pole, and the companion in arms of Kosciusco and Poniatowski, viceroy, and the Grand Duke Constantine general of the army, though he has nothing to object against Zajaczek but that his advanced age might make him a tool in the hands of Russia. Moreover, whatever might have been the fitness of the Grand Duke Constantine for a civil ruler, he had approved himself a soldier fit to command an army under Suwarrow, and he was the emperor's own brother.

Why does Alexander's language sound strangely in a Russian despot's mouth, when we remember the state of the Russian serfs? On mounting the throne, he recalled a multitude of exiles from Siberia, and manifested a continual desire to abolish slavery. After the peace of Luneville, that despot devoted himself to the internal improvement of his dominions—of Russia proper, especially: he appointed a committee, under Prince Lapuchin, to revise the laws; constituted the senate an intermediate body between himself and the people, and mitigated the rigor of bondage, particularly in the crown villages and the German provinces. He introduced vacci-

nation, and paid two thousand physicians to care for the public health. Under him, agriculture was much improved, and the Nogay Tartars, and other wandering tribes, betook themselves to husbandry. Science was fostered, Krasenstern circumnavigated the globe, and schools and universities were established.

Why does any thing generous and humane sound strangely from Alexander's mouth? In 1815, he gave the Poles the privilege of trial by jury, within six months after his return from Paris. The congress of Vienna had united the duchy of Warsaw with Russia, "*irrevocably, by its own constitution*, to be enjoyed by his majesty, his heirs and successors, forever." "If," wrote Alexander himself to Count Ostrowski, the president of the Polish senate, —"if the great interests involved in general tranquillity have not permitted all the Poles to be united under one sceptre, I have at least endeavored, to the utmost of my power, to soften the hardships of their separation; and every where to obtain for them, as far as practicable, the enjoyment of their nationality." This was published by the emperor's authority; and thus the independence and separate existence of the kingdom were preserved, to the satisfaction of the Poles themselves, as even Hordynski admits.

In 1816, he abolished servitude in Livonia, Esthonia, and Courland; and declared that he would no longer transfer, with the crown lands, the boors who cultivated them. He forbade the advertising of human beings for sale; and gave leave to a number of boors, the bondmen of the deceased Chancellor Romanzoff, to ransom themselves from their master.

He said to Madame de Stael, —"You will be

offended with the sight of servitude in this land. It is not my fault; I have set the example of emancipation; but I cannot employ force. I must respect the rights of others, as much as if they were protected by a constitution; which, unhappily, does not exist."

The lady replied, "Sire, your character is a constitution." True; the character of an arbitrary sovereign is a constitution; but there are limits to the power of every constitution. Slaveholders will rebel against any violation of their supposed rights, as readily as at the invasion of their real ones. Past history shows that it is unsafe, even for a sovereign of Russia, to follow a course of conduct generally disliked by the nation.

In 1819, he said to a deputation of the Livonian nobility, who requested his ratification of the new constitution, made for the benefit of the Livonian peasantry, — "You have acted in the spirit of our age, in which liberal ideas afford the true basis of the happiness of nations."

A Russian noble asked the grant of an estate. The autograph answer of Alexander is still preserved: — "The peasants of Russia are, for the most part, in a state of slavery. I need not expatiate on the degradation and misery of that condition; but I have resolved not to add to the number of those who are doomed to suffer it. I have, therefore, laid it down as a principle, not to make peasants objects of property. You shall have the estate; but on one condition, viz., that the peasants shall not be sold or transferred like cattle." This letter is a Bunker Hill monument to Alexander's honor.

Napoleon did not, therefore, find sixteen millions of Poles in arms to receive him, as he had expected

and boasted he should. The Russian campaign sealed the fate of Poland, which, by the congress of Vienna, was allotted to Russia, with the exception of Cracow and its territory, which became an independent republic, governed by its own laws.

The country on the right bank of the Vistula, and the circle of Tarnopola, which reverted to Austria; Dantzic and its territory; Thorn and its territory; the greater part of the department of Posen, and the department of Kalisch, as far as the Prozna, with the city and circle of that name, were allotted to Prussia, and erected into the Grand duchy of Posen.

All the rest became the kingdom of Poland, with a separate government, and with such an organization as the treaties of Vienna secured to all Poles, under either of the partitioning governments, tending to preserve their national existence.

The constitution that the despot Alexander, this "accident and mere creature of circumstances," as Madame de Stael foolishly calls him, gave to Poland, primarily vested the executive power in the emperor of Russia, as king. It was exercised by a council of state, consisting of a governor and five ministers. The diet was to be convoked by the king every other year, for thirty days, and was to consist of the senate, chosen by the king, (consisting of ten bishops, ten waywodes, and ten castellans;) the chamber of nuncios, or representatives, or deputies, appointed by the seventy-seven assemblies of the seventy-seven electoral districts; together with eight deputies from the city of Warsaw, and forty-three from the rest of the nation. The members of the council of state had a seat and vote in the diet.

In the chamber of nuncios, the five ministers, and

the members of the three committees on financial, civil, and criminal laws, could alone speak; the other nuncios voted by ballot.

All laws devised by the council of state were submitted to, and examined by, the diet.

The constitution made all religious and political privileges equal.

The liberty of the press was established on the broadest basis.

The members of the council of state were made personally responsible for their acts.

The bishop of Warsaw was declared primate of the kingdom.

The governor was to be a native Pole, unless one of the imperial princes should be appointed viceroy; and all employments, civil and military, were to be given to Poles.

Under this constitution, the diet assembled, for the first time in twenty-three years, in 1818, and continued to assemble till 1830.

Thus, it seems, this accidental creature of circumstances, who was, like his successor, adored by the Russians, and who is praised even by the Poles, gave the people of Poland — what they never had, and never so much as had reason to hope before — peace, order, and a form of government as nearly like our own as circumstances would admit. It is not every ruler by an accident who has done as well. We think we could point to one or two creatures of circumstances, who have borne rule in the United States, who were fitter to be compared with Alexander's court fool, if he had one, than with himself. Heaven grant that such an "accident" as this despot may befall our own country, at the next election! Thinking very favorably of Alexander's benevolence, we do not

deem very highly of his wisdom, in granting the Poles such a charter. It was giving edge-tools to children, rum to drunkards; and, had he lived a year longer, he might have learned, to his cost, what it is to tame wolves by moderation, and to cast pearls before swine. The Poles knew just as much and as little of self-government, as the Highlander did of the watch that he took for an animal, and dashed to pieces, when it ran down, supposing it was dead!

The sympathetic writers tell us, that the hundred and sixty-five articles of the Polish charter were all violated. "These promises," says Herr Von Lieber, "were kept only to the ear: — restrictions on the press; arbitrary imprisonment; arbitrary and cruel punishments; insults added to injuries; a solemn mockery of a diet, which was not allowed to exercise any real authority; peculation and extortion, practised by the inferior officers; — these were some of the features of the Russian government of Poland." So sing the Polish chroniclers, and the burden is taken up by the encyclopedist. Did it never occur to him that no man, and no men, were ever yet at a loss for an excuse or a coloring for their own misdoings and imprudence, and that there are two sides to every story? Whenever an interested narrator ascribes effects to causes inadequate to produce them, his hearers may be sure that he is trying to disguise or conceal the truth, and that the position he takes is too weak to be tenable, if seriously attacked. His statements are like the Quaker guns of merchant vessels, which, the greater the distance at which they are seen, produce the higher estimate of a force that exists only in imagination.

The liberty of the press was abolished in 1819;

the sympathizers all tell us that; but not one of them tells us why, or by whom, whether by the diet or the emperor. Yet there never was an act of arbitrary power without, at least, a pretext. We should like a little light on this subject. None comes from Russia, and what we get from Poland comes through distorted prisms. The press is not suffered to preach rebellion and bloodshed here.

There were arbitrary imprisonments.

Every imprisonment on the presentment of a grand jury, every arrest made on suspicion, is arbitrary, supposing the prisoner to be innocent. Without arrests and imprisonments, there could be no trials. To know whether the Poles were imprisoned unjustly or not, we ought to know what the charges were; and the fact that the complainants and sympathizers confine themselves to invective and general terms, is pregnant reason to believe that little injustice was done.

> "What thief e'er felt the halter draw,
> With good opinion of the law?"

We shall have occasion to speak of the conspiracy that broke out in December, 1825, against the emperor's crown and life, (which extended its ramifications equally through Russia and Poland,) in another place. Numerous arrests, indeed, took place in both countries; for it is not usual, in any land, to tamper with open, armed rebellion, accompanied with murder. "The same justice," says the Emperor Nicholas, in his proclamation of the 2d of January, 1826, "that commands us to spare the innocent, forbids us to spare the guilty. All those against whom proceedings shall be instituted, and who shall be convicted, will undergo a punishment proportioned to their crimes. From the

measures already taken in the proceedings, the punishment will embrace in its extent, in all its ramifications, an evil, the germ of which is of the growth of years; and I am confident they will destroy it to the very root; they will purge the sacred soil of Russia of this foreign contagion."

Freedom of debate was abolished.

There is no measure so extreme, as no circumstances will justify. It was a public blessing that Oliver Cromwell put an end to the debates of the Long Parliament. It would have been a blessing to France had freedom of debate been suppressed during the Reign of Terror. Abuse of the freedom of debate brought king stork upon the frogs. To cite a hackneyed proverb, the tyranny of a mob is the worst of tyrannies, and nothing but wrong results from its councils. We have nothing to oppose to these sympathizers, in this instance, but analogy and the plain truth. A Polish diet had never been any thing but a mob, down to the year 1818. We make no vague assertions; we merely ask some one, better informed, whether it was aught better after.

Leaving speculation to others, we come to the plain facts, as far as known.

"Senators and deputies," said the Emperor Alexander, in his proclamation to the third diet, "two diets have already been held. That of 1818, guided by a spirit of concord and harmony, promoted the welfare of the kingdom by wise laws. That of 1820, which spent its valuable time in useless disputes, has hardly left a trace of its labors. This will teach you to avoid the consequences of discord, and the delusion of mistaken self-love."

In another proclamation, dated the 13th of February, he was more explicit. "Being desirous,"

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he said, "of removing the danger that the abuse of one article in the charter has already caused, and may cause again — considering that the publicity of the debates in both chambers has induced the speakers to think rather of an ephemeral popularity than of the public good, by which the debates degenerated into empty declamations, calculated to destroy the expected unanimity, and to banish the tranquillity and decorum that should prevail in every important deliberation, — desiring to cure the evil in its source, and to cause our subjects of the kingdom of Poland to enjoy all the benefits which the charter accords to them, — we have resolved to fortify our work, by altering, by means of an additional article, one point of the regulations, that experience has proved to us to be highly detrimental."

He therefore decreed that the sittings at the opening and close of the diet, and those in which the royal sanction of projects of law was declared, should be public, as in time past; but that, in the election of committees, and in every discussion and debate in the two chambers, they should always form themselves into a special committee. This regulation was declared to form an inseparable part of the charter.

Peculation, extortion, and abuse of authority, have ever existed in all countries; especially in Poland, in the time of its independence. It would be a miracle, indeed, if they had not prevailed after its subjugation; and, considering that almost all the civil and military officers of the kingdom were Poles, it is not a little strange that Poles should lay the faults of their own countrymen to the Russian government.

But we have better reason still for believing that

the complaints of the Poles were grossly-exaggerated pretexts to pick a quarrel with Russia — reason that no man can resist. We shall presently prove that these suffering patriots, the Poles, not only endeavored to shake off the rule of Russia in Poland, but also plotted with traitors to subvert the throne of Russia, and conspired against their benefactor's personal liberty, and, consequently, his life; for there is usually but a step from a throne to a grave. If the mild Alexander had lived longer, it is probable that his severity would at least have equalled that of Nicholas. It is not likely that he would tamely have seen the work of his predecessors, for a century, wantonly destroyed.

"On the death of Alexander, 1825," says Lieber, still partial, though an encyclopedist, "a conspiracy broke out in Russia; and, on pretence that it extended to Warsaw, several hundred persons were arrested in Poland, and a commission was constituted, contrary to the provisions of the charter, to inquire into the affair. The *only discovery* of this inquisitorial tribunal was, that secret societies had existed in Poland since 1821."

A pretence! a commission contrary to the charter! Hear Hordynski, certainly the best authority, in this instance.

While certain patriots, (all Poles are patriots,) whose names we do not write, simply because no tongue but a Russian's or a Pole's can pronounce them, were concerting the plan of a revolution, "they were most agreeably surprised by receiving information, in 1824, of a similar patriotic union in Russia for throwing off the yoke of despotism. Their joy was increased when they received a summons from this patriotic union in Russia, at the head of which were —, (a jumble of consonants!) to

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join hands with them. This junction was effected in Kiow, when Prince Jablonowski became acquainted with some of their members, and was initiated into their plans. The invitation was received by the Poles with delight. They offered, with their whole hearts, their aid in the redemption of the Sarmatic nation from the chains by which they had been so long bowed down.

"Soon after this, it was agreed to meet in the town of Orla, in the province of Little Russia, where solemn oaths were sworn to sacrifice life and property in the cause. Resolutions were taken, and the means of their execution were devised. The Russians promised to the Poles, in the case of success, the surrender of all the provinces as far as the frontiers which Boleslaw Chrobry had established. This promise, as well as that of eternal friendship between the two brother-nations, was sanctioned by the solemnity of oaths. The day fixed upon for the breaking out of the revolution was the twenty-fifth anniversary of the accession of Alexander, in the month of May, 1826; and Biala Cerkiew, in Volhynia, was the place selected for the first blow. The reason for choosing this place was, that the whole imperial family, and the greater part of the army, were to assemble there, to celebrate the anniversary of the coronation. This occasion was to be improved to gain over all the well-disposed generals, *and at the same time to secure the imperial family.*"

It is to be mentioned here, to the honor of the Polish conspirators, that they refused to put the Grand Duke Constantine to death, as required by their Russian complotters. "But," said they, "we promise you to secure his person, and, as he belongs to you, *we shall deliver him into your hands.*"

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The Scotch Presbyterians would not themselves decapitate Charles I.; but they bound the victim for the slaughter, and sold him to the less conscientious Independents for a price.

"The patriotic associations on both sides endeavored to increase their party by the initiation of many brave men in the army, and in civil life. In Lithuania, the respectable president of the nobles, Downarowicz, and the noble Kukiewicz of the Lithuanian corps, with many other officers, were admitted into the conspiracy; and, among others, Jgelstrom, Wigielin, Hoffman, and Wielkniec. All the means and plans for the approaching revolution were arranged with the utmost circumspection, and every circumstance seemed to promise success, when the sudden death of the Emperor Alexander darkened those bright hopes."

We think this settles the point, that the concern of the Poles was no mere pretext, as a thousand writers, Polish, French, German, and English, would have us believe. Now let us see of what importance the conspiracy really was; but first, an act of justice must be done to one whose name is never mentioned in this country, or England, but with unmitigated obloquy.

The Grand Duke Constantine has been stigmatized as "a tyrant, publicly declared unfit even for a Russian throne." It has been intimated, not once, nor twice, but a thousand times, that there was a dispute between him and his brother, the present emperor, concerning the succession, of which the conspirators took advantage. The fact is, that the complotters, not comprehending the possibility that the grand duke could be sincere in his intention to abdicate, wished that there might be a division between the brothers, and believed what they wished, as all men are apt to do.

The charitable author of "Travels in Russia," and "A Residence in St. Petersburg," after scanning all the evil motives that can be imagined for Constantine's abdication, gravely comes to the conclusion that he resigned the crown to escape assassination! And yet this man lived years in Warsaw without guards, and died at last in his bed.

The death of the emperor Alexander, loved and revered as he was by his subjects, caused great anxiety in Russia. On the 9th of December, 1825, public prayers were put up in the churches for his recovery. The chief nobility, the ministers, the civil and military officers, and a great mixed multitude, assembled in the church of the convent of Alexander Nevskoi. Before the service was ended, the chief of the staff of the guards, General Niedhart, entered the church, and announced the emperor's death. The news was received by all present with loud lamentations.

The Grand Duke Nicholas, as soon as he heard of the event, announced it to the empress mother, assembled the palace guard, and at once took the oath of allegiance to Constantine I. The guard, all the commanders of corps, and the general staff, followed his example immediately afterwards.

The senate now announced to the Grand Duke Nicholas, what had long been believed, viz., that his brother Constantine had renounced the right of succession. He had been divorced from his first wife, a princess of the house of Coburg, by an imperial ukase, in 1820, and had married a Polish lady of no very exalted rank. It had been decreed before this, that no child of any of the princes of the imperial family should succeed to the throne, unless related to some reigning family by the mother's side.

The senate informed Nicholas that, in 1823, the late emperor had deposited with them a sealed packet, which they were directed to open, in case of his death, before they proceeded to any other act. This command they had obeyed, and found that the packet contained a letter of Constantine, dated the 14th of January, 1822, renouncing the succession; and also a manifesto of Alexander, dated the 16th of January, 1823, ratifying this renunciation, and declaring Nicholas heir to the throne.

What puts the idea of aught like trick or collusion out of the question, is the fact, that documents of the same tenor were found to have been deposited with the directing senate, with the holy synod, and in the cathedral Church of the Ascension at Moscow.

But Nicholas refused to avail himself of these instruments; and the directing senate, after having taken the oath of fealty to Constantine, ordered the event to be promulgated every where by printed ukases. They likewise ordered that the form of the oath they were to take, as faithful subjects of Constantine I., should be sent to all the authorities, civil and military; and commanded them to cause it to be administered to all his majesty's male subjects, excepting the crown peasants, the peasants of the seigniorial domains, and the serfs; and that they should send their official reports of the taking of the oath to the senate, with the signatures of those who had taken it appended.

All this was done while Constantine was yet in Warsaw; though Alexander's death was known there two days before the tidings reached St. Petersburg.

Instead of assuming any of the insignia of royalty, however, Constantine continued to live as a

private individual. On the day after the news was received, he despatched his brother, the Grand Duke Michael, with two letters, to his mother and his brother Nicholas, in both of which he declared his adherence to his abdication.

When he had been formally notified that the oath of allegiance had been taken to him, he still solemnly persisted in his purpose, and refused to receive the official documents transmitted to him as emperor. The following is his answer to the minister of justice: —

"The counsellor of the college of the section of the procurators-general of the directing senate has remitted to me a despatch from your highness with this address — 'To his Imperial Majesty Constantine Paulowitsch, a very submissive report of the minister of justice.'

"As I do not think myself entitled to accept it, (because, according to this direction, it is not sent to me,) I send it back to your highness by the same officer. By my letter of the 15th of December to his excellency the president of the senate, the privy counsellor of the first class, Prince Lapouchin, your highness must have been exactly informed of the reasons which do not permit me to accept the imperial dignity. I have, in consequence, only to repeat to you, in a few words, that, according to the oath taken by all the subjects of his majesty, the Emperor Alexander, of glorious memory, in which, among other things, it is expressly said that every subject is faithfully to serve and to obey, in all things, not only his majesty, the Emperor Alexander Paulowitsch, but also the successor to the throne of his imperial majesty who should be designated; and as it appears, from the documents opened in the council of state, which

are entirely conformable to those deposited with the directing senate, that, by the supreme will of his late majesty, the Grand Duke Nicholas has been designated as successor to the throne, the directing senate, as conservator of the will of his late majesty, the Emperor Alexander Paulowitsch, of glorious memory, ought to have carried it, and will carry it, into execution.

"While acknowledging with gratitude the attachment which the directing senate has shown to my person, I request your highness to express to that noble body all my gratitude, adding that, the more deeply I feel the value of this attachment, the more I am penetrated with the duty of conforming unalterably to the will manifested by his late imperial majesty."

After receiving his brother's letter, and not till then, Nicholas consented to mount the throne.

He issued a manifesto, announcing his accession, on the 24th of December, and communicated the instruments, on which his claim to the crown was founded, to the empire, viz.:—

The letter from Constantine to the late emperor, declaratory of his intent to abdicate the right of succession, stating that he "does not lay claim to *the spirit*, *the abilities*, *or the strength*, that would be required to exercise the high dignity" attaching to his right of primogeniture, and professing himself content with a private station;

Alexander's answer, approving Constantine's renunciation.

A manifesto by Alexander, settling the crown on Nicholas, in conformity with Constantine's renunciation;

The letters from Constantine to Nicholas and the empress mother.

At the same time, the new emperor wrote to Constantine to announce his accession, and received the following affectionate answer: —

"Most Gracious Sovereign: With deep emotion I have had the happiness to receive the most gracious rescript of your imperial majesty, announcing your happy accession to the ancient throne of our beloved Russia. The supreme law of Russia, the sacred law, which the stability of the existing order of things renders a blessing of Heaven, is the will of the sovereign whom Providence gives us.

"By executing this will, your imperial majesty has executed that of the King of kings, who so evidently inspires the monarchs of the earth in affairs of such high importance.

"The decrees of God are accomplished. If I have in any thing coöperated in their accomplishment, I have only done my duty; the duty of a faithful subject, of a devoted brother; in short, of a Russian, who is proud of the happiness of obeying God and his sovereign.

"The Almighty, who protects the destiny of Russia and the majesty of the throne; who lavishes his benediction on the people whom he finds faithful to his laws; the Almighty, in his mercy, will be your guide, sire, and will guide you by his light.

"If my most ardent efforts can contribute to lighten the burden that God has imposed on you, I hasten to lay at the foot of your throne the homage of my unlimited devotedness, of my fidelity, of my submission, and of my zeal in executing the will of your imperial majesty.

"I implore the Most High, that his holy and inscrutable providence may watch over the precious health of your majesty, that he may prolong your

days, and that your glory, sire, the glory of your crown, may be transmitted from generation to generation.

"I am, sire,

"Your imperial majesty's most faithful subject,

"CONSTANTINE.

"WARSAW, { *Dec.* 20, 1825, (O. S.) / *Jan.* 1, 1826, (N. S.)"

The manifesto was dated on the 24th of December; on the 25th, his brother's renunciation was read by Nicholas to the senate. Then he declared his acceptance of the crown, and was immediately proclaimed emperor. The manifesto was published the next day, on the morning of which all the regiments of guards were to take the oath of allegiance to Nicholas I.

We can see nothing in all this that looks at all like pride, or ambition, in either of the imperial brothers; nothing that argues that Nicholas, or the Russian people, thought Constantine unfit for a sovereign of Russia; nothing that is not highly honorable to the hearts of both; nothing in which even the political rancor of a Pole, or the inflamed ignorance of an English sympathizer, could detect a fault. Hence we infer that ignorance of facts alone has caused Constantine's name to be held in detestation.

At noon, on the 26th of January, 1826, the general of the guards and staff reported that the oath of allegiance had been taken by six regiments. No account had been received from the other regiments; but no importance was attached to the fact, till it was reported that four artillery officers had made opposition, and had been put under arrest; also, that the remainder of the ar-

tillery had taken the oath. Then came the news that three or four hundred men of the Moscow regiment had left their barracks, and proclaimed Constantine I., with colors flying. These men marched to the great square of Isaac, where they were soon joined by a great many of the people, and by many of the body-grenadier regiment and marine guards. No other corps took part in the sedition. The whole number was but about two thousand — whence, it seems, the conspirators had miscalculated the military as well as the popular feeling.

The distinguished General Miloradovitsch, the aged survivor of fifty battles, went to the square to address the rebels; but, in the act of so doing, was assassinated by a man in a citizen's dress, who shot him, mortally, with a pistol: he died a few hours after. Count Sturler, chief of the grenadiers of the body-guard, and two major-generals, were also slain, and many other officers were wounded. Undismayed by the fate of his faithful generals, the emperor himself repaired to the spot, unarmed; but his efforts to appease the mutineers, and bring them back to duty, were unsuccessful. It was in vain that he appealed: in vain that he explained to them his brother's magnanimous renunciation; there were among them those whose interest, or at least intention, it was, not to be convinced or persuaded; there are none so deaf as those who will not hear; and the emperor was, at last, obliged to order the artillery and the loyal guards to advance. The rebels threw themselves into a hollow square, and first delivered their fire, but were soon dispersed, with a loss of two hundred slain. Order was restored by six o'clock.

The troops remained faithful, and bivouacked

all night round the palace. The Grand Duke Michael, who had arrived in the capital during the tumult, succeeded in bringing six companies of the Moscow regiment back to their duty. These companies, however, had taken no part in the revolt; they had merely refused to take the oath.

It is in vain, now, to inquire what were the designs of the conspirators. Their motive could not have been any predilection in favor of Constantine, inasmuch as they required their Polish accomplices, as a primary condition, to put him to death at the outset, as Hordynski informs us, having full knowledge of the facts. Neither could it have been any great general grievance, for they had complained of none; or any personal repugnance to Nicholas, for the conspiracy originated, and was to have been carried into execution, in the lifetime of Alexander. Though the premature explosion was hastened by his death, it took place before Nicholas had afforded any pretext for it by any act of his own. For all these reasons, therefore, we conclude that it arose from the resentment of the nobles at the settled policy of the Russian government, which originated in Ivan Vassilievitsch I. and was continued by all his successors, down to Nicholas I.—a policy that steadily aimed at the humiliation of the great and the exaltation of the small. This has been the natural course of things in all feudal nations; no aristocracy ever yet surrendered their privileges without a struggle.

Whatever the motive of the conspiracy may have been, it is very certain that one of its objects was to seize the royal family; whether to murder or make tools of them, One alone knoweth. It took the shape of a military mutiny, and was quelled,

as all mutinies should be, as the laws of war allow; and there was neither cruelty nor injustice in the matter. It was to have been expected that the sufferers would complain, and that they would find sympathy; criminals, of every grade, always do. It is quite probable, as the government alleged, that the assassination of the whole imperial family, and the massacre of all their adherents, were contemplated. What change could the conspirators have expected to effect while Nicholas lived — a monarch for whom no labor was too great, and whose courage no danger could daunt?

A special committee was immediately organized to investigate this rebellion, consisting of the Grand Duke Michael, the minister of war, privy councillor Prince Galitzin, and Generals Berkendorff, Lewascheff, and Palapoff. It is stated, and is more than probable, that they speedily obtained information of the extent of the plot and the names of the conspirators. Numerous arrests, especially of military officers, took place in various provinces of the empire, as well as in the capital. The extent and particulars of the plot were not, however, made public. The general belief and report was, that the conspirators intended, as a preliminary to establishing a constitution, to have murdered the whole imperial family, when they should have assembled, according to custom, on the 12th of January, in the chapel of the castle, to participate in a religious ceremony in memory of the Emperor Paul. The victims were to have been shut up in the chapel, and there murdered; after which, the castle was to have been seized, all foreigners massacred, and the city given up to the soldiers for pillage, for three days.

In consequence of discoveries made by the commit-

tee of investigation, orders were sent to Lieutenant Colonel Gebel, commanding the Tchernigoff regiment of infantry, to arrest Lieutenant-Colonel Mouravieff Apostol, of the same regiment; but Apostol resisted his commanding officer, wounded him in several places, and then instigated six companies of the regiment to revolt, by urging the oath of allegiance they had taken to Constantine. He next arrested the courier and gendarmes sent to convey him to St. Petersburg, plundered the regimental chest, set the malefactors in the prison of Vassilikoff at liberty, and gave the town up to rapine and pillage. Three companies of the regiment, however, remained steadfast in their duty, under Major Trouchin, and separated from the rebels.

As soon as the commander-in-chief of the first army received advice of this mutiny, he ordered Prince Scherbatoff to march instantly, with a sufficient force, to exterminate the rebels. Lest they should escape the prince's pursuit, the Grand Duke Constantine himself — whose name and supposed claims were the pretext of their rebellion — was directed to coöperate with Scherbatoff, with another corps of infantry.

This fact is, of itself, sufficient proof, that, as Nicholas said, in his manifesto of the 2d of January, "the sacred words *fidelity*, *oath*, *legitimate order*, even the names of the czarowitsch and the Grand Duke Constantine, were for them *only* a pretext for treason. They wished to profit by the moment, to accomplish their criminal designs — designs long contrived, long meditated, long matured in darkness, and the mystery of which the government had penetrated only in part. They intended to cast down the throne and the laws; to overturn the empire, to produce anarchy."

Mouravieff Apostol seems to have intended, at first, to march to Bronssiloff, by Yastoff; but the motions of his pursuers made him change his plan, and he was proceeding to Biala Tcherkiov, in hopes of getting possession of a treasure in the house of the Countess Branicki, when he found himself surrounded on all sides. On the morning of the 15th of January, General Rath came up with him on the heights of Oustinovka, near the village of Pologoff, in the district of Vassilikoff.

Seeing escape impracticable, Apostol advanced in column on the imperial artillery; but his column was instantly broken by grape-shot, and then charged by cavalry; upon which the rebels threw down their arms. Seven hundred were made prisoners, including Apostol himself, who was wounded by a grape-shot and a sabre-cut. Baron Solovieff, the second captain, two lieutenants, and a brother of Apostol, (who was a colonel on half pay,) were also taken. Two lieutenants, and another brother of Apostol, were among the slain, not to speak of the privates killed and wounded. Not a drop of blood was lost on the imperial side.

Mouravieff Apostol, the martyr of liberty, as Hordynski calls him, who made use of one brother's name to dethrone the other, was hanged on a gallows at St. Petersburg.

This base conspiracy has greatly retarded the progress of liberty among the nobility, and has been advantageous in the same degree to the myriads of the true people. The severity of the restrictions on travel, which has of late been doubled, and the censorship of the press, are part of the punishment brought on the many by the misconduct of the few. It was time to close and watch the roads when every noble traveller carried a dis-

ease more dangerous than small-pox or cholera, in his own person ; it was time to stop the press when it fulminated murder and rebellion. The relative condition of the two countries considered, and the character of the Russo-Polish conspiracy, the course of the emperor was not half so harsh as the laws shortly after promulgated in France, against the liberty of the press, on account of the attempt of a single, obscure scoundrel. In no other country would such a conspiracy have been so leniently punished throughout. Peter the Great was not nigh so merciful with the Strelitzes.

Against whom, but the factious nobility, is the censorship of the press directed? Not the lower classes; for they do not read. The Rev. Mr. Venables, an English clergyman, certainly not prepossessed in favor of Russia, in his "Domestic Scenes," treats the charges against Nicholas of tyranny, cruelty, &c., in this matter, with contempt; and unhesitatingly asserts that the emperor has secured the warm personal attachment of his subjects by his conduct, and saved his country from anarchy and bloodshed.

CHAPTER V.

DEATH OF THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER. — RETROSPECT. — THE MILITARY COLONIES.

The death of Alexander caused general inquietude throughout Europe; for it was an event that, it was supposed, would endanger the tranquillity of his vast empire, and might wholly change the tenor of its foreign policy. This uneasiness was augmented by certain absurd rumors, that he had come to his death by foul means — rumors which, even now, are not entirely dissipated, and which, therefore, we think it fit to refute by a simple statement of facts.

Alexander spent much of the year 1825 in visiting different parts of his dominions. Toward the end of autumn, he visited the Crimea. His health had for some time been giving way; but, partly on account of his moving from place to place, and partly because there was little communication between Europe and the parts of Russia where he spent his time, the failure of his constitution was little known, nor did the reports concerning his health excite much attention.

He left the port of Sebastopol on the 10th of November, after a minute inspection of every thing connected with his fleet on the Black Sea. On his way to Bachtchiserai, he felt a slight pain in his head, which he attributed to a cold; and, on his return, he made arrangements to travel along the shore of the Sea of Azof on horseback. He stopped at Taganrog, a town situated on the brink of a very lofty promontory, which commands an extensive

prospect of that sea, and of the European coast, to the mouths of the Don. On his arrival there, he felt too ill to proceed, and wrote so to the empress mother. He told her, however, that he had nothing to fear from his illness, and would take care of himself. The Empress Elizabeth, his wife, was with him.

He had feverish symptoms, and a kind of erysipelas in the leg. The erysipelas suddenly disappeared, and the fever assumed a dangerous aspect. "I shall share the fate of my sister," said he, "who died of an erysipelas driven in." The physicians thought, however, that this was but a subordinate symptom, and that the emperor's disease was a gastric bilious fever, of the same character as that which often rages in those regions.

On the 18th, he was better; but soon sank again. He became delirious on the 27th; and, though the medical treatment he received was apparently successful for the next two days, the appearance proved fallacious. He died, calmly and without pain, on the 1st of December.

A few hours before his last, he had the blinds of his window opened, and exclaimed, as he looked on the cloudless sky of the Crimea, "What a lovely day!"

The empress seldom left his pillow during his illness. When he had breathed his last, she washed his face and hands, closed his eyes, crossed his hands on his bosom, and then fainted. While his fate was yet doubtful, she wrote as follows to the empress mother: —

"Dear Mother: — I was not in a state to write to you by the courier of yesterday. To-day, a thousand and a thousand thanks to the Supreme

Being!—there is decidedly a very great improvement in the health of the emperor—of that angel of benevolence in the midst of his sufferings. For whom should God manifest his infinite mercy, if not for him? O my God, what moments of affliction have I passed! and you, dear mother, I can picture to myself your uneasiness. You receive the bulletins. You have, therefore, seen to what a state we were yesterday reduced, and still more last night; but Wylie, (an English physician,) today, says himself that the state of our dear patient is satisfactory. He is exceedingly weak. Dear mother, I confess to you that I am not myself, and that I can say no more. Pray with us—with fifty millions of men—that God may deign to complete the cure of our well-beloved patient.

"ELIZABETH."

Thus died, in the forty-eighth year of his age, a sovereign whom the world ranks among the best of princes, both as regards his public and private character. He had accomplishments that would have distinguished any man in common life; his temper was equable, and he was, therefore, beloved in social intercourse. He was a most dutiful and affectionate son. The empress enjoyed his confidence, and he always treated her with kindness and respect. He was, like his successor, indefatigable in business, and honestly and diligently zealous for the improvement of his people. In the most trying situations, (and he was often placed in them,) he always conducted with firmness, prudence, and moderation. No man was ever intrusted with greater power; and by no man was power ever less abused.

"The evil that men do lives after them," says the inspired poet. Alexander reversed the prover-

bial line; the *good* he did lives after him, and will, while Russia and Poland remain parts of *terra firma*. We have already recorded his noblest panegyric, his efforts to emancipate the bondsmen of Russia; but that is not all the good he did.

He founded, or remodelled, seven universities, two hundred and four academies, many seminaries for the instruction of teachers, and upwards of two thousand schools on the Lancasterian plan.

He gave important aid to the Bible societies, and granted important privileges to Jews who became Christians.

He abolished the custom of branding, and slitting the nostrils, connected with the knout. Knouted criminals are now branded with a cold iron.

He also abolished the secret court, as it was called, to which political criminals were brought, and compelled, by hunger and thirst, to confess.

He extended the privilege of the nobles — that their estates could not be forfeited from their innocent families for their crimes — to all his subjects.

He gave efficient aid to manufactures and commerce, by introducing a more judicious tariff; and he improved the currency and finances, after the establishment of a sinking fund, by the erection of the bank of the imperial chamber, by making Odessa a free port and granting it other privileges, and by providing continually for the construction of roads and canals.

He banished the Jesuits from his dominions, because they interfered with the affairs of the government and disturbed the peace of families.

He granted to all peasants the right of establishing manufactories — a right confined, before, to the nobility and merchants of the first and second classes.

He abolished the tax upon income derived from landed property.

It would require a larger volume than this to record the tenth part of what Alexander did for the good of Russia and mankind; but there is one of his acts that merits more than a passing notice, though it has failed of the whole of its intended effect; we mean his gigantic plan of consolidating and amalgamating the two classes on which such a throne as the emperor of Russia's rests for support, — the peasantry and the army.

After the war with Napoleon, the immense expense of the standing army of Russia became a prime subject of the emperor's meditations. To obviate this difficulty, Count Araktschejeff counselled the emperor to quarter the soldiery among the crown peasants; to build military villages, and to frame a code of regulations for their government. To each house so many acres of land were to be attached. In a word, the crown peasant was to become a soldier, and the soldier a crown peasant; both were to aid in supporting themselves by cultivating the soil, and both were to be drilled, disciplined, and kept in readiness, as parts of an army of reserve. The recruits levied from the remote governments, before this, had been taken from their homes for an indefinite time, sometimes for twenty-five years, and often forgot all local attachments, and even that they had a country. By this new institution the soldier had a home and abiding-place, a point of departure and return; in time of peace he was provided for, and so were his family during his absence in active service.

The experiment was first tried at Novogorod, in such manner that, in case the quartered soldier should fall sick or die, the crown peasant could im-

mediately take his place. Each chief colonist was clad in uniform, and put in possession of a house and fifteen *desatines* of land, (forty-five acres,) for which he was to maintain one soldier, and his horse if the quartered troops were cavalry. He was also provided with stock and farming implements, bound to use them, and to labor forty-four days in the year for the crown, in keeping up the roads and contributing to the common magazine; after which, the surplus produce was at his disposal. The quartered soldier is called an agricultural soldier and assistant, and is required to assist in the labors of the farm. He also selects one of his family, his son or brother, as a second assistant, who, with the consent of the colonel of his regiment, (which depends on his good behavior,) inherits his real estate at his decease. The second son, or some other relation, belongs to the reserve, and also dwells in the house; the third is likewise an agricultural soldier; the other members of the family are called *cantonists.*

The boys remain with their parents till they are eight years old, when they are sent to the military schools, to be prepared for their future vocation. At thirteen they become cantonists, and are at the same time educated and trained as soldiers and cultivators. They become agricultural soldiers at seventeen, and members of the colony.

Each colony has its court of justice, in which the senior officer presides.

The girls are bred in separate schools, and very seldom marry any other than a soldier. No person is allowed to come within the military district without a pass from the military authorities. The peasants' houses are committed to the care of the soldiers.

After spending from twenty to twenty-five years

in service, the agricultural soldier may retire from his double duty, or become an invalid, when his place is taken by one of the reserve.

We have no data from which to determine to what extent this system now is or will be carried. In 1824, the military colonies formed a chain of defence across the western frontier of Russia, her only assailable side, from the Black Sea to the Baltic, in which all male children were born soldiers, and so remained from seventeen to sixty. The colonists were duly divided and officered as regiments and companies; a part of the crown lands is set apart for their maintenance, and on it they support themselves during peace. In active service, they receive pay. It was calculated then (in 1824) that the military colonists numbered three hundred thousand men, of which one half were at all times ready and fit for active service—probably an over-estimate.

In the same year, Russia had a standing army of three hundred and sixty thousand infantry and artillery, and forty thousand cavalry. General Araktschejeff remained commander-in-chief till his death, and all the cantonists in the preparatory schools were made subordinate to him.

Under this system, the old system of recruiting the army by conscription must necessarily fall somewhat into disuse. A considerable number of cantonists enter the service every year, in place of those of the reserve who have been drafted to fill the places of the agricultural soldiers, and the boys of the schools take the places vacated by the cantonists. The money obtained from the several governments for the release of recruits is applied to the education and support of the boys and cantonists. The proprietors of ten governments were released from the obligation of furnishing recruits, in 1823, on payment of

stated sums. Thirty-five hundred of these releases, at 2000 rubles each, produced 7,000,000 of rubles. In 1822, the expenditure on the military colonies was 4,962,775 rubles, and the total cost, from the time of their organization to 1824, amounted to 115,780,115. Four of the six millions of crown peasants were then sufficient to provide quarters for the whole army, and the result of the whole arrangement was, that, beside six or seven hundred thousand regular troops, Russia, in case of need, would have had a considerable army of reserve ready for service, disciplined in the best possible manner. Such was the state of things in 1824. It has been greatly improved by the Emperor Nicholas.

The experiment, as a whole, has proved a failure. No man can work well at two trades at once. In proportion as a soldier becomes attached to home and family, he is unwilling to leave them, and impatient of control. Discontent has always prevailed, to a greater or less extent, in the military colonies, and mutiny has not been unknown in them.

CHAPTER VI.

CAUSES OF THE POLISH INSURRECTION. — MAJOR TOCHMAN'S TRACT.

We ask what caused the Polish insurrection of 1830, and the universal reply is — the tyrannical grand duke and the despot Nicholas. We ask for the grievances of the Poles; and one writer tells us of arbitrary arrests and punishments; another talks of the restriction of the press; and a third gravely informs us that the system of *espionage* was intolerable; — just as if we had lost our memories, and had never heard of Fouché and Marion de l'Orme, of Savary, and Sartines, and D'Argenson. Hear, now, what one of these sympathetic mourners says on this head.

"When a fundamental change has taken place in the government of a country, and a numerous party exists, not constituting what is called, in free governments, an *opposition*, but actually striving to overthrow the established order, — under such circumstances, a secret police may, perhaps, be admissible, as poisons are prescribed in some dreadful diseases, producing bad effects, undoubtedly, but preventing worse."

Was not this precisely the condition of Poland? Where, and by what sovereign, was a secret police ever needed, if not by the Emperor Nicholas, when a conspiracy had broken out in both his kingdoms, extending to thousands, and affecting, not only his authority, but his liberty, and his very life? To complain that he used the means in his power to

detect and destroy the ringleaders of a sedition that threatened the destruction of peace and order among sixty-one millions of people, and of his own family, is to suppose him more purely brutish than the porcupine: even he erects his quills when assailed. Arbitrary arrests and punishments! Who — we do not say what sovereign — stops to consider whether the man who holds a dagger to his breast means innocently or not, or whether he acts most lawfully himself in knocking him down with his fist or an iron bar? "Warsaw was made one vast prison!" What wonder, when almost every noble in it was a disturber of the peace or a conspirator!

"The news of Alexander's death," says Hordynski, "stunned, at first, the patriotic club in Petersburg. Nevertheless, they resolved to act. They hoped to profit by the troubles, between Nicholas and Constantine, about the succession. On the 18th of December of the same year, the signal for revolt was given in Petersburg. Some regiments of the guard were on the side of the patriots, and with them assembled great numbers of the people, ready to fight for *liberty*. Yet all this was done without sufficient energy, and without good leaders. It was unfortunate that, at the time, Colonel Pestel — acknowledged by all to be a man of great talents and energy — happened to be absent in Moscow.

"The people assembled in their *holy cause*; but, being without leaders, began to fall into disorder, and a few discharges of cannon were sufficient to disperse them. As the Grand Duke Constantine, on account of his marriage with a noble Polish lady, Grudzinska, in 1823, was obliged to renounce the throne of Russia, the im-

perial power was, by a written document, given to the Grand Duke Nicholas, as the eldest in succession after him."

Some companies of the guard, wrought upon, we may be sure, by the conspirators, had taken the oath of allegiance to Constantine immediately after the death of Alexander, and were now required to take it to Nicholas. They refused; and the mutiny was blended with the rebellion, — or rather riot, — which lasted an entire day, and was suppressed, first by the firmness of Nicholas, who mowed down one or two companies of the mutineers with grape shot, and then by his moderation. He arrested the ringleaders, and dispersed and pardoned their deluded followers.

It proved, on investigation, that this conspiracy had existed for years, and was founded partly on crude ideas of liberty and equality, and partly on the offended pride of the nobility; offended, because, from Ivan Vassilievitsch downward, the constant effort of the czars had been to diminish their monstrous power over their serfs, and to instruct their ignorance. Compared with the nations either of Poland or Russia, whose feelings they have been sedulously represented to express, they were but as drops in the ocean, and their knowledge — that of the Russian rebels, especially — must have been small indeed, if they expected to effect aught but their own ruin and that of their followers.

"All the prisons of the realms," says Hordynski, in continuation, "were prepared to receive their victims. Over the whole of Poland and Russia the sword of cruel revenge was suspended."

Supposing all the instigators of this criminal enterprise in every sense of the word to have been

put to death, their execution could not have been called injustice, cruelty, or revenge. As it was, Nicholas showed far more moderation than most other sovereigns have done in like circumstances. Five only of the noble Russian Jack Cades, (martyrs of liberty, Hordynski calls them,) taken in open battle, with arms in their hands, were hanged, as they deserved; and a few hundreds were sent to Siberia.

At Warsaw, the trials of the conspirators were, perhaps, conducted more harshly, as might have been expected from the temper of the Grand Duke Constantine, who tried them, and who was the principal object of their hatred. Senator Soltyk, undeniably one of the chiefs of the conspiracy, was, perhaps, flogged with the knout; in consideration of his years, his life was spared. Kryzanouski, another of them, committed suicide, Hordynski says, to avoid torture, which had been abolished by Catherine half a century before; but more probably, to escape the gallows, to which his fellows were sentenced. The senate, however, by a commission of which they were tried, contrary, as the Encyclopædia Americana informs us, to the provisions of the senate, commuted their sentence to a few years' imprisonment.

Of this infamous conspiracy, Fletcher, the source from which we Americans have gotten all our ideas of Poland and Nicholas, speaks in the terms presently to follow. It is true that the statement is not Fletcher's own, but is borrowed from some nameless scribbler in the Metropolitan Magazine; but, as he incorporates it into his book without note or comment, he endorses it, and is *particeps criminis* in spreading false reports. The reader will observe that this anonymous writer is flatly

contradicted by the confessions of Hordynski, a Pole, who, having been an actor in what he describes, may certainly be believed when he criminates his own party, conceiving that he is honoring it by so doing. We should not quote from Fletcher, (believing his speculations, original or borrowed, wholly unworthy of attention,) but that his words serve as an illustration of the manner in which sympathy for Poland has been uniformly and systematically "got up."

"The Grand Duke Constantine, who has played so conspicuous a part in the affairs of Poland, is worthy of something more than a mere passing notice. Though possessed of considerable talents, he is, in fact, an untamed tiger, giving way on all occasions to the most violent paroxysms of temper. He has a deep sense of the rights of his order, and holds the feelings of every other class as absolutely nought. So soon, therefore, as he found that his imperial brother was no longer the liberal patron of constitutional rights, he gave the most unrestrained license to his capricious and violent injustice," &c. &c.

"But, notwithstanding these increasing grounds of dissatisfaction, nay, of deep and unqualified abhorrence, the good sense of the associated regenerators of their country's freedom prevailed over their excited feelings. The ferocity of the unprincipled savage but continued them in the path of duty, and in the necessity of the utmost caution. Yet thus rendered circumspect, they never forgot that these practical illustrations of tyranny imposed upon them additional and more urgent duties to their country. Under these convictions they restricted their operations to the most narrow limit, and nothing beyond Poland and Poles was ever regarded

in even a speculative view. Yet, in spite of all this caution, on the breaking out of the Russian conspiracy, after the death of Alexander, in favor of Constantine, in opposition to his younger brother, the present emperor, attempts were made to connect the Polish association with the Russian revolt."

We have no doubt that this falsehood was penned deliberately, and with a perfect knowledge of the true state of facts. The author of it deserves credit for his ingenuity, at least. There is no way of lying so sure to mislead, as the blending of so much undeniable truth with falsehood as will reconcile probabilities; and this can only be done with a thorough knowledge of the case, which, it is evident, this writer possesses. Such special pleading as his has, at all events, been successful in prejudicing both England and the United States against the Emperor Nicholas.

There was no need to attempt to justify the rebellious Poles: the work was done to his hand. We look upon the partition of Poland as the most fortunate event that ever happened to that country. One incontestable wrong has constituted an excuse for any wrongs the Polish aristocracy may commit, from that time forth forever. It is like the Catholic church's inexhaustible stock of merits. Such is the feeling of all mankind. A Pole can do no wrong, because his grandfather has, perhaps, been wronged; for the dear, gullible public seldom look beneath the surface of foreign soils.

"Under this pretext," the same writer continues, "an immense number of the association, already in bad odor from having been denounced by Alexander, were arrested. The most chosen victims were persons eminent for their rank, attainments,

virtues, and patriotism; not that noisy and presumptuous quality, miscalled patriotism, which displays itself in idle declamation and useless turbulence, but in that silent devotion to the best interests of their country, illustrated by improving its condition, and by promoting every measure calculated to benefit the people. The individuals so arrested were declared, by an imperial ordinance, to be guilty, in defiance of an acquittal by the senate, which alone could legally investigate the charges. The imperial edict then issued, condemning the accused to imprisonment, exile, and every penalty that unprincipled caprice could suggest. In this career of criminal folly a singular step was taken. The whole of the offences were published, the defence suppressed."

Here are two palpable lies, with two circumstances. The accused were tried, as the constitution directed, by a court consisting of senators, all Poles themselves, though Hordynski says they were in the Russian interest. It was called the supreme court of the diet, and its president was Count Vicenti Krasinski, whom even Hordynski describes as "a man of great merit, a brave soldier, as well as a good citizen, who had been faithful to his country for fifty years, had made for it the greatest sacrifices, and was regarded by the soldiers as a father, and very much beloved by the nation."

The accused were charged with nothing but conspiracy and rebellion, which they did not deny; and, if their defences were not published, it was because they sought not to repel the charges against them, but to justify their conduct, and hold it up as an example to others; or, as their counsel above cited has it, "as these offences (conspiracy and rebellion) involved only what every Pole felt to be a

sacred duty," &c. Can any one wonder that the emperor was unwilling his subjects should be taught that to subvert his throne, and destroy his life, were sacred duties?

The prisoners were not pronounced guilty by the emperor's ordinance, nor were they illegally tried. The second section of the seventy-sixth article of the charter expressly provided, that the execution of the laws "shall be intrusted to the commission of justice, chosen from the members of the supreme tribunal," meaning the senate; and the commission of justice which tried the accused (which Fletcher calls the supreme court of the senate, and Hordynski the supreme court of the diet) was so chosen. The Pole does not say that these prisoners had not the full benefit of the law; though his language infers it. He says that the procurator-general (answering to our attorney-general) "sentenced all who were condemned (that is, found guilty) to death, to be hanged and exposed on a wheel." It is difficult to penetrate the obscurity of Hordynski's style,* and equally so to unravel the tangled skein of his confused ideas; but we suppose he means, if he means any thing, that the prosecuting officer urged the strict observance of the law against high treason, as it was his duty to do, and just as our attorney-general would have done.

It seems, too, that, whatever the sentences of the prisoners may have been, whether "imprisonment, exile," or "every penalty that tyrannical caprice could suggest," they did not emanate from the emperor; or that, if they did, they were not final and without appeal; for the senate had power

* Hordynski wrote in Polish, which he translated into bad French, as he wrote, which was rendered into English by a person whose knowledge of French was about equal to his own.

to, and did, commute them — the president of the commission of justice, the worthy and well-beloved Krasinski, only, voting in the negative.

With regard to the ferocity, cruelty, and barbarity, of the "untamed tiger, the unprincipled savage," the Grand Duke Constantine, in the absence of all proof for disinterested evidence, we have but one fact to state. This tiger and savage slept, nightly, in the outskirts of the city he is accused of outraging in every possible manner, in the midst of a populace goaded to madness by his cruelty, without guards, though he had three Russian regiments at hand! Certainly, he was either the most courageous or the most stupid tyrant that ever reigned; or he was, as we think, a very passionate man, as the sympathizers aver, but not a tyrant at all. His usual practice was to rise at four, and appear among the troops, and in public, till two, his dinner hour; after which he slept four or five hours, and then gave the evening to amusement.

It is admitted, on all hands, that a secret political society had existed in Poland from the year 1821, for the purpose of gaining over the officers, civil and military, to revolutionary views; an association similar in most, if not in all respects, to the Carbonari in Italy, and the Tugenbund in Prussia. To their exertions was owing the insurrection of 1830. It was hurried, however, to a premature explosion by the emperor's preparations for war on France and Belgium, and the discontent of the inhabitants of Warsaw at having the troops billeted upon them. "Of this discontent the 'patriots' made use, in endeavoring to propagate their views of the necessity of a revolution." Seditious placards were posted at

every corner. "The holy moment was now fast approaching, and Warsaw was in anxious expectation."

The event that was the immediate cause of the revolt is variously stated. We have not the Russian version of it.

One author (Fletcher's authority) says, "The police of the grand duke, ever on the alert to render themselves acceptable to their master, by affording him objects on which he might wreak his ruthless passions, planned an association for the purpose of involving the most respectable and distinguished persons in Poland; and for that purpose inveigled a number of ardent youths, just after the revolution in Paris, to attend meetings, and to avow patriotic opinions. The prime conspirator, either from indolence, or a belief that there might be danger in devising a new organization for the association, used that which had been discovered during the early proceedings against the patriots. A copy of this scheme falling into the hands of some of the members of the actual association, excited a suspicion that they had been betrayed; and the recollection of former horrors decided them to take immediate measures for liberating themselves from their detestable thraldom.

"Constantine had established a school for the education of inferior officers, with a view to destroying the national character in the army. The numbers at this establishment were, at this time, 180, of whom not more than six or eight were parties to the association. These, however, early on the evening of the day already mentioned, went into their barrack, addressed their comrades, explained their views, and, without a single dissen-

tient, — not even excepting one individual who was sick in bed, — they armed themselves, and commenced their operations."

Another says, "It appears that it (the revolt) was immediately occasioned by a sham conspiracy, got up by the Russian police, who had thus induced a number of young men to betray themselves, and crowded the prisons with the victims. Not only the Polish officers, the youth of the military school, and the students, had been gained over to the cause of the patriots, but the greater part of the citizens; and the chief nobles were ready to encourage an effort to save themselves from what they now foresaw — the occupation of Poland by a Russian army, and the marching of the Polish troops to the south of Europe. Such was the state of things when the insurrection at Warsaw broke out.

"A young officer entered the military school, on the evening of that day, and called the youth to arms. They immediately proceeded, and were joined, on their way, by the students of the university. Another party of cadets and students paraded the streets, calling the citizens to arms, and they were joined by the Polish troops."

A third very enthusiastic sympathizer says, "On the first of December, the Russian superintendent of the school for military engineers at Warsaw, where some hundreds of the Polish youth were educated, had the insolence to order two of the young officers to be corporally punished. The students instantly rose against the author of the indignity, drove him out, and rushed to the quarters of a regiment of the native guards, calling on them to rise against the oppressors. The troops immediately followed the call — the spirit spread —

the Russian soldiers were every where gallantly and instantly attacked, and routed."

Hordynski's edition differs materially from these three discrepant ones, and is about as likely to be correct, or inaccurate, as either. "An event which served to irritate all minds, and hasten the revolution, was the arrest and imprisonment of eighty students. These brave young men were assembled in a private house, in order to pray to God in secret for the souls of their murdered ancestors, on the anniversary of the storming of Praga, by the bloody Suwarrow, in 1796, when none were spared, when Praga swam with blood, and was strewed with the corpses of thirty thousand inhabitants. In memory of this event, the patriots had met almost every year for secret prayer, since public devotions on the occasion had been forbidden by the grand duke. The above-mentioned students, with some priests, were in the act of worship, praying to the Almighty, and honoring the memory of their forefathers, when the doors were broken open with great violence, and a number of gendarmes, under their captain, Jurgasko, with a company of Russian soldiers behind them, entered the apartment. Our brave youths continued their prayers upon their knees about the altar, and in that position suffered themselves to be bound, and dragged away to prison. The news of this outrage was spread through Warsaw with the quickness of lightning, and it thrilled every heart. This was the occasion for fixing upon the 29th of November as the day for commencing the revolution, when the 4th Polish regiment, many of the officers of which were among the initiated, were to mount guard in Warsaw."

It seems, then, that the outbreak did not origi-

nate with the military students; but had long been planned and premeditated.

"The patriots assembled early in the morning of the 29th of November, to renew their oaths, and ask the blessing of the Almighty on their great undertaking. The moment approached. Seven in the evening was the hour appointed for the commencement of the revolution. The signal agreed upon was, that a wooden house should be set on fire in Szulec Street, near the Vistula. The patriots were scattered over the city, ready to stir up the people on the appearance of the signal. Most of them were young men, and students. Some hundred and twenty students, who were to make the beginning, were assembled in the southern part of Warsaw. All was ready. At the stroke of seven, as soon as the flame of the house was seen reflected on the sky, many brave students, and some officers, rode through the streets of that part of the city called the Old Town, shouting, 'Poles! brethren! the hour of vengeance has struck. The time to revenge the tortures and cruelties of fifteen years is come. Down with the tyrants! To arms, brethren, to arms! Our country forever!'"

What followed is known to the world. Eighteen days after, the Emperor Nicholas issued a proclamation, declaring that no concessions would be made to the rebels, and another to the Russians, telling them that the Poles had dared to propose conditions to their legitimate sovereign. "God is with us," he added, "and, in a single battle, we shall be able to reduce these disturbers of the peace to submission." This resolution was long debated in the Russian senate, and it was not without extreme reluctance that Nicholas issued his manifesto, and resolved on rigorous measures. We

have it on the authority of an American gentleman, then residing in St. Petersburg, that the emperor's anxiety and sorrow for what had befallen in Poland seriously affected his health. On the 24th of January, the diet declared Poland independent, and the throne vacant.

On looking back to the history of the Russian kingdom of Poland, from 1795 to 1830, the most enthusiastic sympathizer is compelled to admit that the independence of the nation was hopelessly destroyed — by whose fault or crime it avails nothing to inquire, so far as its restoration is concerned. The partition had been acquiesced in by the world; the territory had been divided between three of the most powerful nations in Europe, from whose grasp Napoleon himself had not been able to wrest it. The Poles of Russian Poland had obtained, under Alexander and Nicholas, nearly as liberal a form of government, and as good laws, as we, people of the United States, have ourselves. They could gain nothing, collectively, by a change, and we do not believe the nation had much to complain of; for we give little faith to the highly-wrought complaints of the defeated rebels; and, granting them all to be literally true, their wrongs were not sufficiently grievous to justify a desperate appeal to arms, in the first resort, under the circumstances. We do not find any thing in the character of Nicholas, either as man or sovereign, to warrant the belief that he was at all disposed to act the part of an oppressor; there is not a solitary act of tyranny imputed to him by one of his maligners. The worst that even one of his beaten rebels can say of him, is, that "he seemed to terrify every one with his very look. His lowering and overbearing eye was the true mirror of Asiatic despot-

ism. Every movement was a command, and his imperious air was in true harmony with the ruling passion of his mind. Such a sovereign must needs bring distress on our country, acting through the instrumentality of a brother like himself."

We may conclude that a man, or a sovereign, is a tolerably good sort of a personage, when his bitterest enemies can find no fault with him but his looks; and yet, if any man alive is calculated to make a favorable impression by his manners and personal advantages, writers of all nations agree that the Emperor Nicholas is that man.

If Nicholas was difficult of access, and forbidding in his manners to the Poles, Major Hordynski, before he condemned him, should have consulted the history of his country; and there he might have read that such things as daggers have been worn in Poland. He should have remembered, too, that the first greeting the emperor received from his Russian subjects, on his accession, was an attempt, fomented, sanctioned, and shared, by Poles, to destroy his throne and life. Common sense might have told him that such attempts at conciliation are not calculated to inspire the person so favored with much benevolence toward those who make them, though it does not appear that the Russo-Polish conspiracy of 1826 ever dwelt further in the emperor's memory, so as to affect his political conduct, up to 1830. The major does not pretend that it did; he only believes that such a looking sovereign "must needs bring distress on his country." We do not see the sequence; and if there were one, ill looks are no sufficient cause for rebellion or revolution; far less for murder.

We do not see that Nicholas is in fault for having succeeded to, or for maintaining, the authority of

his predecessors. To go back three reigns to investigate the validity of his title, seems to us very like seeking for —

John Bull's title to the sovereignty of Ireland,
Bonaparte's right to the crown of France,
The pope's right to his triple diadem,
The right of the Romans to Italy,
The right of the imperial Tartar to the throne of China, and
Our own right to the soil of Massachusetts.

We live not in a world of abstractions, but of stern realities; and as things are not as they should be, we must make the best of them as they are. The Emperor Nicholas has done so, and, it seems to us, he has done wisely. To have acknowledged the independence of Poland would not have benefited the Poles, or the world, but the contrary; and it would have involved the retrogression, if not the downfall, of a far more important nation — Russia.

It was not the people of Poland who sought to shake off his rule — there is every reason to believe they were satisfied with it: it was but the aristocracy, the fourteenth part of the nation, seeking the restoration of their ancient consequence and privileges, in whose abolition and destruction every good man ought to rejoice. Their success would have been a stab under Polish humanity's fifth rib, and the passing-bell of Polish freedom. Nicholas acted for the greatest good of the greatest number, in opposing them. He acted like a true soldier, in refusing to hear any thing from rebels with arms in their hands. The whole "head and front of his offending hath this extent, no more."

We do not well to give implicit credence to the statements of the missionaries of the Polish Propa-

ganda, the burden of whose discourse is freedom, patriotism, and Prince Adam Czartoryski.

"A host of speculative writers," says one of these propagandists, "have endeavored to impress the public mind with an idea, that the mass of her (Poland's) people, before that event, (the triple partition,) were slaves or serfs, subjected to a few nobles. It has been falsely asserted, that the Polish people, at this moment, under the governments of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, are happier than before; and that the dismemberment of their country has injured only the interests of a few nobles —petty tyrants."

Now, as we hope for a better life, we never saw or heard the servitude of the great mass of the Poles disputed before we undertook to write this little volume; never till, after having penned the preceding pages, Major Tochman's tract happened to fall in our way. Every writer we have consulted on the subject confirms it, and the authorities from which we quote are not a few. At the same time, we believe that our view of the rebellion is as new to the American, French, and English public at large, as it was to us two years ago, when we first began to study and judge for ourself. It seems to us strange, nay, surprising, that Major Tochman should have thought it necessary to repel attacks that were never made, or, if made, were made so feebly as to make no impression, and leave no trace, on the public mind. We can only account for his thus begging the question by supposing an hostility that does not exist and fortifying his position before war is declared, by supposing that he feels its weakness, and that, being himself a revolted Polish soldier, and, of course, a noble, he feels as gentlemen of loose morals, and

ladies of doubtful character, do, when the subjects of honesty and chastity are mentioned.

Major Tochman is a Pole, and, of course, knows more of the condition of his country than we can pretend to know; but this advantage is counterbalanced by his questionable position as a revolted subject, and by the fact that he is almost avowedly a partisan of Prince Adam Czartoryski, and a missionary of the Polish Propaganda. These facts, however, are not generally enough known to have their proper weight; and we should also recollect that a Pole, speaking of the affairs of Poland to such foreigners as only speak French and English, plays the fox in the royal game of goose; sure that his hearers cannot oppose him, if they would. George Psalmanazer wrote what he pleased of the Island of Formosa, and was believed for half a century, because there was no one to contradict him.

We shall briefly recapitulate Major Tochman's assumptions, together with our reasons and authorities for disbelieving them *in toto*.

Before the introduction of Christianity, he says that Poland was an absolute monarchy, and the condition of its people was unknown. If he had called it an absolute anarchy, down to the year 1791, he would have come nigher the truth. In the eleventh century, he adds that the people were divided into four classes, viz., the wojewods, corresponding with the lords and peers of England and France, a privileged class, to which the bishops and prelates belonged. From this body the king selected his council, consisting of twelve members.

The nobles, who had no share in the government. They were the army, equivalent to the knights of feudal Europe.

The *Wiesniacy*, agricultural people, peasants or

serfs; according to M. Tochman, a free and independent people, mostly tenants. Those of them who fought the battles of their country became noble by so doing.

This, too, was and is the case in detested Russia.

"The owners of land used to build hamlets and villages, and the poor, who wished to settle in them, used to take a lease of as many acres as they pleased. The produce belonged to the tenant, who paid his rent by working on other land for the owner from two to four days in the week, either personally, or by the labor of his servant or hired man."

Pretty high pay, too, for leave to toil, even were the statement true.

"The labor of every man having been counted for one day's rent, the tenant could pay his weekly rent in a day, by sending his landlord a number of laborers equal to the number of days' rent due. All these peasants were under the protection of the law, as well as the nobles, and could remove whenever and wherever they pleased. Some of these peasants paid additional rent, in the shape of eggs, poultry, and flax."

It is hardly to be supposed that the Polish peasantry or tenants were better off in the eleventh than they were in the last century. In 1827, the peasants on one large property held about forty-eight acres apiece, for which they wrought two days a week, with a yoke of oxen. If further labor was *required* of them, they were paid 3d. a day for two days more, and, if beyond these four days, at the rate of 6d. a day. On another property, they held thirty-six acres each, gave two days a week regular rent, and received 6d. a day for

additional labor with, and 3d. without, the yoke of oxen.*

This service was thus modified under despotic Russia. We shall presently see what it was under the republic; if it is not mockery to call Poland a republic, at any time.

"The *fourth class* (it is M. Tochman who speaks) were prisoners of war; and their descendants, slaves of the nobles and wojewods; their condition was not worse than that of the English villeins and tenants at will. All these slaves and serfs were emancipated at once, and declared as free as the peasants, by the great national assembly, in 1347, which also limited the power of the kings, and laid the foundation of that new Polish constitution which made Poland an elective monarchy, and, finally, a republic."

All very fine, this, for the serfs and slaves; but the major has forgotten to tell us how and when the power of their masters over them was ever abridged, or what aristocracy, having the power to oppress, ever failed to abuse it. As the Russian proverb has it, "God is high up, and the czar a great way off." He seems to think that nobody in America but himself has ever read history, as Mahomet Emir said to the ambassador Polocki. He has also forgotten to tell us when any law, not protective and extensive of their own privileges, was ever respected or obeyed by the Polish nobles, or continued in force a single month, if it ever came into it. "Fine words," says the vulgar proverb, "butter no parsnips." To talk of acts of Polish kings, or national assemblies of slave-holders, is as absurd as to quote the laws for the protection of negroes in the

* Jacob, who wrote from personal observation.

West Indies, or any where else, which are always nugatory, because they leave the power of abuse in the hands of the master, and render the proof of it as difficult as it is to convict a Roman Catholic cardinal of incontinence; which requires seventy-two eye-witnesses.

The great Casimir died in 1370. Why does not Major Tochman tell us that, till his time, the tenants, if he so pleases to call them, had been held by their lords as incapable of removing from their soil and service, or of having a will of their own, and that the lord might murder a tenant with perfect impunity. Casimir so far attempted to modify this state of things as to declare that, if any tenant was injured by his lord, he might sell his property and go whithersoever he pleased. A formidable part of the abuse was, that the proprietors pledged their *tenants* to each other for their debts, thus making the said free and happy tenants prisoners and exiles, perhaps for life. Nay, if a noble killed another noble's tenant, by accident or otherwise, the matter was settled by his making over to the damaged proprietor an equally valuable tenant. For abolishing, or rather for trying to abolish, these abominations, Casimir received from his nobility the derisive title of "king of the farmers."

It was the custom, too, when a tenant died without children, for the lord to seize his property. Casimir decreed that the property should go to the nearest relative. "Who have assailed you?" he asked of a deputation of the peasantry, who came to complain to him of their grievances; "were they men?" "They were our landlords," was the answer. "Then," said Casimir, "if you are men, too, are there no sticks and stones?"

If the nobles were powerful enough, in the next

reign, (of Lewis, king of Hungary,) to extort a charter for themselves from their sovereign, confirming all their privileges; if they had power to drive him from the throne;* of what avail to the serfs, peasants, tenants, or farmers, (whichever Major Tochman likes,) were the laws of John Casimir? The fact that the laws of 1347 were reënacted again and again, from age to age, at almost every change of government, conclusively shows that they were never of any advantage to the nation. As an able writer observes, "the nobility were still the only NATION. They seized all the benefits of the law, made the king a puppet, the people doubly slaves, the crown totally elective, and the nation poor and barbarous, without the virtues of poverty or the redeeming boldness of barbarism."

"It is true (the propagandist admits) that, even while Poland boasted of her republican form of government, the peasants were not admitted into any legislative or executive office, and they were very often abused by the nobles, which gave occasion to *some of our own writers* to blend and compare their condition with that of the real serfs of other countries. This evil was in the nature of things. (Why, then, seek to deny, disguise, or palliate it?) The mass of the nation were illiterate, ignorant, and superstitious; and, in such condition, the sovereignty of the democratic principle could not be extended to all her people, (Was this intended as a sop for the defenders of our own domestic institution?) for such liberty would have stopped the progress of civilization, and reduced Poland to the rank of savage nations."

* Koch, *Tableau des Révolutions.*

Setting aside the fact that there was no room for such reduction, —

"He that is down can fall no lower!" —

our pleader for Poland has here unconsciously blundered upon the apology for negro slavery, for feudal bondage, for Russian serfdom, for servitude all the world over. What other justification do slave-holders ever offer for slavery, than the unfitness of slaves for freedom, and the evils attendant on immediate emancipation? — evils that are not imaginary in Poland and Russia, as the conspiracy of 1826, and the rebellion of 1830, abundantly prove; evils that the emperor finds real, inasmuch as they spring from the selfish pride of the nobles, not from the ignorance or vindictive temper of the serfs.

At the same time the unfortunate pleader for Poland has unwittingly been betrayed by his zeal into a gross inconsistency, nay, a flat contradiction of himself. On the very same page where he denies the existence of slavery in Poland, and quotes an act of the Polish diet, in 1347, in support of his denial, he virtually acknowledges and apologizes for its continuance, with such an argument as only a desperate case suggests, viz., that the Polish slaves were not freed, because they were unfit for freedom.

Let us now see what the actual condition of the Polish people was, before they were so fortunate as to come under the rule of Russia. "Under the republic, the Polish peasants were slaves, and did not, in fact, enjoy any greater consideration than the blacks of Carolina and Georgia in the present day."* They were the absolute property of their masters,

* Coxe, 1, 113.

who, down to the year 1768, might kill them, without incurring any heavier penalty than a small fine. Though the murder was then made capital, the enactment was nullified by the accumulation of evidence it required to prove the fact.* Slaves were required to labor five days in the week for their lords, who might also seize any money or property they acquired on their own account; they might inflict corporal punishment, and sell them, like negroes at Washington, and bullocks at Brighton. The boasted liberty of Poland was, in sad truth and stern reality, what Mahomet Emir said — "to live without laws;" the power of the few to trample the many to pieces, and grind the pieces to powder; to humiliate and oppose their sovereign, and to sell themselves.† It would be strange, indeed, if some of them were not, once in a great while, disposed to treat their thralls with justice and humanity. The Chancellor Zamoyski emancipated his slaves, as we have seen, and was branded by his order as a traitor for so doing; the Czartoryskis, and Radzivils, and Jablonowskis, have freed some of their peasants, and ameliorated the condition of the rest; James Birney emancipated his slaves; and Nicholas the First has broken the bonds of more serfs, his own property, than all the nobles of Russia and Poland have, from the creation of the world to this day. But one William Penn is not a nation of Quakers, nor are Zamoyski and Nicholas samples of the Polish aristocracy.

Harrig, the author of "Poland under the Domin-

* Coxe, 1, 113.

† Coxe, 1, 14. *Voyage de deux Francais dans le Nord d'Europe.* Busching's *Introduction.* Connor's *State of Poland.* Voltaire, *Histoire de Charles Douze.* Coyer, *Vie de Sobieski.* Malte-Brun, *Tableau.* Fletcher's *History of Poland.* McCulloch's *Gazetteer.* Rulhiere, *Anarchie de Bologne*, and a host of others.

ion of Russia," and a discharged officer from the Russian service, — a very prejudiced and questionable authority when he speaks of any thing Russian, and a very partial one to aught that is Polish, — says of the Polish peasantry, even under the constitution of 1815 — "The Polish serf is, in every part of the country, extremely poor, and, of all the living creatures I have met with in this world, or seen described in books of natural history, he is the most wretched. He is in a worse situation than the Russian serf, who is maintained by his master, and has at least a subsistence in return for the cudgellings he receives."

Against this mountain of concurrent testimony, shall we believe that all former writers on Poland have been in error, and that Major Tochman alone sees clearly; shall we, can we, believe him, when he tells us that, "as early as the fourteenth century, the children of the peasants were admitted to the same schools in which the children of the nobles were educated"? shall we believe that "peasants alone" battled against Russia, under Kosciusco, to restore their own degradation?

> "O! where's the slave so lowly,
> Condemned to chains unholy,
> Who, could he burst his bonds at first,
> Would pine beneath them slowly?"

We may indeed believe that "those (peasants) who graduated, were declared nobles *de jure*, and, as such, entitled to the full enjoyment of all the rights of free citizens of the republic" — ay, *those* who graduated. The second schoolboy in a class may certainly claim to be within one of the head, if there are but two boys in it.

In the 16th century, M. Tochman tells us, the voters of Poland were 480,000, out of a popula-

tion of fifteen millions; while France, with a population more than double, has now only 180,000 voters. Very well; but what Frenchman receives a blow, were it from a peer, without returning it, or is robbed of his earnings, or sold in the market? But the nobility of Poland sprang from among the country people, says Tochman; they are not the descendants of another conquering race.

If they are petty tyrants and taskmasters, what matters it where, or from whom they sprang?

"There are, in Poland, many villages and hamlets inhabited by nobles only, who are as poor as the peasants, and till the soil with their own hands, who, before the partition, nevertheless, enjoyed an equality of rights with nobles worth millions, and to whom thousands of peasants paid rent."

We know it: Voltaire introduced these titled beggars to the world a hundred years ago. Hence it is that every outcast who finds his way, or escapes, from Poland, is a count, or noble, or, at the very least, a gentleman; though he may not have a penny in his pocket, or a rag to his back. Why not? there is nobody to expose him. Under the old laws of the republic, the nobles were *terrigenæ;* every rascal who owned half an acre in fee simple, or could prove his descent from any body who had ever owned a like estate, was a noble, or gentleman, the terms being synonymous; provided, always, that he and his progenitors had always been *consumere fruges nati*, and had never debased (!) themselves by engaging in manufactures or commerce, these being the only two ways of gaining an honest livelihood in Poland.* No king can

* Busching, *Introduction to Poland.* Malte-Brun, *Tableau de la Pologne.* Coxe, *Travels*, &c.

create a gentleman; but the king of Poland could not create even a Polish noble. This swarm of needy patriots, with nothing to lose and every thing to gain, constitutes the ready material for Polish revolutions and rebellions. The more need is there that they should be taught that they are no better than the rest of mankind; and that all hope of regaining their former privileges should be crushed out of them.

Under Russia, Austria, and Prussia, *on a changé tout cela*. The oppressive privileges of the nobility have been suppressed. They can no longer trample on the useful classes, and a poor gentleman considers it no more disgraceful to work at home than to beg abroad. Freedom, indeed! freedom of thought and speech, where dissent was punished with death on the spot; because, said they, "acts of violence are few in number, and only affect the individual sufferers; but if once the precedent is established, of compelling the minority to yield to the majority, there is an end to any security for the liberties of the people." (The people!)*

But if there are poor nobles in Poland, so there are, or lately were, also rich and powerful ones, with enormous estates; such nobles as, more than all other causes, have retarded the civilization and emancipation of all Europe. The estates of Prince Czartoryski and Count Zamoyski were equal in extent to half of England. In the time of the republic, the one furnished the army with twenty, and the other with ten thousand men. What wonder, then, that the present Prince Adam should have been impatient of the Russian government,

* **Salvandy, *Histoire de la Pologne.***

and eager to regain the lost influence of his fathers by rebellion, or in any other way? What wonder he sighed for their privilege to maintain troops and fortresses? What wonder that he was at the head of the late insurrection, in a great measure his own work; or that he is now the Father Superior of the Polish Propaganda? What wonder he regretted his own exemption and that of his vassals from arrest, whatever might be their crimes,—when, in short, he, and such as he, were every thing, and freedom and the Polish people, nothing?

With what face does Major Tochman boast that "there always was more freedom in the spiritual power, and more independence in the secular, than in any other Christian country," knowing, as he must, that it was the religious intolerance and oppression of the Polish nobility that brought the heavy hand of Catherine II. down on them? Did not this pretended land of toleration become the field of religious contest under Sigismond III. and the Jesuits? Were not the Protestants deprived of all places of trust and honor? Did not bigotry add weight to the serf's shackles in that reign? Did not Polish jealousy of the independence of the Cossacks, the attempts of the nobles to enslave and reduce them to the condition of serfs, and to proscribe their religion, and their inhuman butcheries and oppressions, drive that people to revolt, in the succeeding one? How dares he boast that the Jews found a home in Poland when they were persecuted elsewhere? Does not every abridged school geography tell us that they are not even allowed to hold landed property, to this day? How came the Jews so to swarm in Poland? Did the toleration of the Polish nation give them a welcome? Did they not owe it, rather, to the adulterous weakness

of Casimir the Great for a Jewess, whom he suffered to lead him by the nose, as Esther did Ahasuerus? Spiritual freedom, indeed! Was not Lysinski burned at the stake on an absurd charge of atheism, in the reign of John Sobieski, the greatest monarch and man Poland ever produced? This man's offence was having written, on the margin of a stupid, inconclusive treatise, in proof of the existence of God — "*Ergo, non est Deus.*" He lost his life because the Polish clergy had not sense enough to understand the sarcasm. His tongue was torn with a hot iron, and his hands burned before his pyre was lighted. To prevent his escape, they even violated one of the protective laws of their own order, by which a noble could only be apprehended after conviction.

The servitude of the peasants was modified in 1791, when the Poles, trusting to the promised support of Prussia, attempted to throw off their dependence on Russia. They had a great task before them, and a powerful enemy to contend with; it was, therefore, necessary to conciliate other classes than the nobles. Under Napoleon, slavery was wholly abolished in the duchy of Warsaw, nearly identical with the kingdom of Poland, in 1807; the labor and service of serfs having been defined and regulated by law; but the influence of the change was not so great as might have been expected, owing to their ignorance. The peasants may now leave the land, without asking their lords' permission; but they must first pay all arrears, and, from inability to do this, and various other causes, they seldom leave the estates where they were born. The habit of servitude is no more easily eradicated than other rooted habits; — the peasants do as they used to do, when their service was

altogether compulsory; they neglect the lands. It is not, however, uniformly the case. Many have extended their farms, and some have become proprietors; but many years must probably pass, before any great general change takes place.

Since the insurrection of 1831, when the Poles cast away their last chance of independence, Poland has been governed nearly like the rest of the Russian empire. The council of administration consists of three directors-general, (of the interior, of justice, and of finance,) a comptroller-general, and other functionaries, appointed by the emperor, to whom the reports of the council are submitted by a secretary of state for Poland, residing in St. Petersburg. There is, also, in Petersburg, a department for Polish affairs, to which the government of that kingdom has been confided ever since the suppression of the insurrection. The legislative power is vested in the sovereign; and the laws for the government of the kingdom are submitted to him, for his sanction, by the Russian council of state. The local administration is in the hands of the civil governors, with the same powers exercised by the heads of the different governments of Russia.

The civil and commercial codes in force are nearly the same as in France; the criminal code is after the pattern of those of Austria and Russia. Personal and religious liberty is garantied, and those who do not interfere with politics are as safe in Poland as any where else. There is a censorship of the press, that, for obvious reasons, is more rigid here than in Russia. Justices of the peace have jurisdiction of causes not involving more than five hundred florins, above which they are carried to the tribunals of original jurisdiction in the capitals

of the several governments. There is a court of appeal and a court of cassation at Warsaw, and there are commercial tribunals in all the principal towns. Political offences are tried and judged by a council of war, or a commission specially appointed.

Before 1830 there was little diffusion of education excepting among the nobility and the upper classes of townsmen. But sixteen thousand of the entire population received instruction, or one in two hundred and sixty-two. After the insurrection was suppressed, the schools were reorganized on the same plan as those of Russia. Private as well as public schools are under the supervision of the government. There were about forty-four thousand pupils, in public and private establishments, in 1835, and in 1839 upwards of seventy thousand, or one out of every sixty-two individuals.*

An order issued by the Russian government, in 1838, gave great offence to the Poles and their sympathizers, though, we confess, we cannot see the harm of it. It seems to us that if despotism teaches one Pole in sixty-two to read and write, where only one in two hundred and sixty was taught before by constitutional monarchy, the fact argues very little in favor of Polish capacity for self-government. Nor can we see what harm there is in teaching a Pole Russ, one of the dialects of his own mother tongue. The ukase established a teacher of the Russ language in every primary school, and directed that all children attending such schools should learn it. It was also ordered that no person should be employed as a tutor, unless qualified to give instruction in Russ,

* Russia under *Nicholas I.*

and that no person unacquainted with that language should be appointed to any civil or military employment.

There can be little doubt that it is for the interest of both countries, as it is the policy of the emperor, to Russianize Poland; or that the gradual substitution of the one language for the other is the most effectual means that can be taken to effect that result. Were it desirable, or were there any rational prospect that Poland would ever be able to regain her independence, we might, perhaps, find arguments against the measure. But there is no such prospect; and, as Poland has no literature worth preserving, we believe no valid objection can be found to the promotion of the interests of both nations by their consolidation.

When we look back to the state of Poland previous to 1791, we cannot but wonder that the kingdom was not dismembered long before. It was, in fact, proposed by the Swedes in the reign of Casimir V., as the only way of quieting, and preventing it from disturbing the peace of other states.*

However objectionable may have been the motive of the powers who dismembered Poland, however indefensible the act, and dangerous the precedent, there can be no rational doubt that the measure was most decidedly advantageous to the great bulk of the Polish people. It is folly to suppose that the constitution of their government could have been remodelled to any good purpose — history shames the supposition. The whole framework of society was radically vicious. It would and will require long years before newly-emancipated slaves, degraded and brutalized by centuries of oppression,

* Rulhiere.

(whose fawning servility even now evinces the burden from which they have been relieved,) and a proud and jealous nobility, can be restrained within the limits of law and justice, and raised to an equality with civilized nations. Such a work can only be achieved by a strong government, such as the Poles never could have formed among themselves. However loudly the Polish nobility may lament, and their sympathizers may echo them, it is not to be denied that the condition of the people has signally changed for the better.

Unluckily, we have few data on which to estimate the extent of the change for the better. Absolute power in Russia and Poland cares little for the opinion of other nations, and it is not the fashion of the Emperor Nicholas to stoop. We have seen what has been done in regard to the system of general education. Poland has undoubtedly suffered much in consequence of the late rebellion, in consequence of destruction of life and property, proscriptions, &c.; but, within the last eight or ten years, the country appears to have revived. The municipal revenue of Warsaw, in 1834, was a fourth more than in 1829.

The value of insured buildings in Poland, in 1835, was 112,204,000 more than that of buildings insured in 1829.

In 1828, the population was 4,088,289; in 1838, it was 4,298,962.

The old roads have been improved, and new ones have been made, which would seem to argue an improvement in trade and intercourse. On the whole, late writers assure us that the country is in a state of improvement.

If, in the foregoing chapter, we have condensed Major Tochman's superfluity of words, we think

he will not accuse us of altering, perverting, or suppressing, his meaning. Nevertheless, to make him amends, we will subjoin a synopsis of his tract, which may serve, and seems to have served, for the basis of all modern declamation on Polish patriotism and Polish wrongs.

"Kosciusco — great martyr of freedom — sacrilegiously erased from the map — time's bloodiest picture — Sarmatia fell — infamous act — mankind indebted to Poland — defended Christianity and Europe from the Tartars — preserved humanity, religion, and the arts — asylum of the persecuted — blood of heroes consecrates the soil — freedom of worship allowed forever to all denominations — heroes of Lexington and Bunker Hill — thousands of foreign soldiery — cities and villages smoking — mourning mothers — murdered husbands and sons — palpitating hearts — horror — native land — genius of liberty — grave of Pulaski — monument of Kosciusco looks down — rational liberty of all men — serfs of Russia — kiss of Judas — literary splendor of Poland — laurels of the hero and bard" — &c. &c. &c.

We pause, and forbear, in mercy to the reader. If any one's depraved taste relishes

> "Sound without sense, and words devoid of force,
> Through which no art can find a clew,"

let him read the Rev. J. N. Maffit's autobiography, or Macpherson's Ossian; and, if that won't do, Major Tochman's tract at length.

We know, as well as Major Tochman can tell us, that anarchy, and oppression, and bloodshed, and misrule, have prevailed in other lands besides Poland; we know that the crimes of nations, or individuals, do not deprive their posterity of their

natural rights, or exclude them from the pale of Christian charity and sympathy; but, when a son of one of the most degraded nations on earth endeavors to exalt that nation above all others, and to claim, not only an active sympathy in her behalf, but to excite hatred toward another, friendly people, it is time that

> "—— the veil, that friendly hands would cast
> O'er faults forgotten and imprudence past,"

should be rent away, and that the suppliant land should be seen as she is, drenched in human blood, sitting in the midst of the misery she has wrought, in the chains she has forged, fitted, and riveted on herself. The people of Van Diemen's Land should not be reproached with being the children of convicts; but it will be exceedingly unwise of them, to say the least, to boast of their ancestry.

When a beggar asks relief for his sick wife and starving children, burnt out of house and home, it behooves us, before we draw our purse-strings, to satisfy ourselves that he has not broken his wife's heart, starved his children in order to revel in riot himself, and set fire to his house in his intoxication.

CHAPTER VII.

RUSSIA. — STATISTICS. — HISTORICAL FACTS. — RUSSIA AS IT WAS.

Before we attempt to convey to the reader our idea of the past and present condition of Russia, it may be well to define its actual limits.

In the first place, it is the most extensive empire of ancient or modern times.

It comprises the whole northern portion of the eastern hemisphere, from the frontier of the Duchy of Posen and the Gulf of Bothnia, to the Pacific Ocean and Behring's Straits; or from the 18th to the 190th degree of east longitude; a distance, on the 60th degree of latitude, of nearly six thousand miles. Its extent from north to south is also very great, stretching from the 38th to the 70th, and in some places, to the 78th degree, with an average breadth of about fifteen hundred miles. Besides this, Russia claims a large territory on the north-east coast of North America, the Aleutian Islands, Nova Zembla, and other insular possessions.

Russia in Europe, including Finland, has been estimated by Hassel to contain 72,869 square geographical miles;

Russia in Asia, 275,767 do.;

Russia in America, 24,000 do.;

Total, 372,636 square miles.

A later estimate, by M. Kœppen, of the Academy of Arts and Sciences at St. Petersburg, in the employ of the government, gives the following areas of its grand divisions, which are, probably, more correct: —

Governments.	Area in sq. m.	Pop. in 1838.
Northern Provinces.		
Archangel,	15,212	239,000
Olonetz,	2,354	230,200
Vologda,	6,880	747,500
Great Russia.		
Petersburg,	710	585,200
Novgorod,	2,070	825,400
Pskof,	1,045	705,300
Smolensk,	954	1,064,200
Moscow,	550	1,249,700
Twer,	1,122	1,297,900
Yaroslaf,	807	916,500
Kostroma,	1,438	958,700
Nijni Novgorod,	878	1,071,100
Vladimir,	831	1,133,200
Riazan,	707	1,241,700
Tambof,	1,152	1,591,700
Tula,	529	1,113,500
Kuluga,	541	914,900
Orel,	755	1,366,300
Koursk,	794	1,527,300
Baltic Provinces.		
Esthonia,	315	282,200
Livonia,	826	740,100
Courland,	475	503,000
White Russia.		
Witepsk,	778	717,700
Mohileff,	824	846,600
Minsk,	1,983	1,034,800
Lithuania.		
Wilna,	1,161	1,315,800
Grodno,	570	791,700
Bialystock,	162	251,000

Governments.	Area in sq. m.	Pop. in 1838.
Little Russia.		
Volhynia,	1,073	1,314,100
Podolia,	576	1,548,200
Kieff,	798	1,459,800
Tchernigoff,	898	1,300,000
Pultawa,	1,062	1,621,600
Kharkoff,	1,386	1,334,000
Voroneje,	1,354	1,507,200
Don Cossacks,	2,550	640,300
New Russia.		
Ekaterinoslaf,	1,186	791,000
Kherson,	1,099	765,800
Taurida,	2,040	520,200
Bessarabia	794	720,000
Wolga and Caspian Provinces.		
Kasan,	1,104	1,220,800
Pensa,	674	988,400
Simbersk,	1,141	1,199,000
Saratoff,	3,473	1,564,400
Astrakhan	2,829	258,500
Caucasus, &c.,	1,803	478,500
Oural Provinces.		
Orenburg,	6,535	1,771,400
Perm,	2,721	1,488,800
Viatka,	2,497	1,511,600
Siberia.		
Tobolsk,	888,18	684,900
Tomsk,		1,077,000
Irkutsk,	162,000	507,300
Yakutsk,		162,400
Kamschatka,		4,500
Okhotsk,		7,700
Yeniseisk,		205,800

Transcaucasian Provinces.

Governments.	Area in sq. m.	Pop. in 1838.
Georgia, &c.,	3,381	2,000,000
Finland,	6,406	1,397,145
Kingdom of Poland,	2,267	4,298,962
Russian America,	17,500	61,053
Total,	364,388	59,673,260

Classified Account of the Population of Russia, by the Minister of Finance.

	Males.	Females.
Russian priests,	52,331	
Deacons and sacristans,	63,178	
Male children of priests, deacons, and sacristans,	138,548	
Total,	254,057	249,748
Priests of the United Greek and Roman Church,	7,823	7,318
Catholic priests,	2,497	
Armenian do.	474	343
Lutheran do.	1,003	955
Reformed Church,	51	37
Mahometan Mollahs,	7,850	6,071
Tartar Lamas,	150	
Nobles.		
Hereditary,	284,731	253,429
By virtue of service, with their sons,	78,922	74,273
Petty officers, who have left the army, and are employed in the civil service,	187,047	237,443
Foreigners of all classes,	22,114	15,215
Military colonies,	950,698	981,467

	Males.	Females.
Inhabitants of Towns.		
Merchants, ...	131,347	120,714
Shopkeepers, artisans, &c.	1,339,434	1,433,982
Citizens in the eastern provinces,	7,535	6,966
Greeks of Nijni, gun-makers of Tula, &c. . . .	10,882	10,940
Citizens of Bessarabia, . .	57,905	56,176
Inhabitants of Villages.		
Peasants, the private property of the emperor and the imperial family, peasants annexed to the crown, &c. .	10,441,399	11,022,594
Peasants, the property of nobles, ...	11,403,722	11,958,873
Wandering Tribes.		
Calmucks, Circassians, and Mahometans of the Caucasus, ...	245,715	261,982
Territory beyond the Caucasus.		
Georgia, Armenia, Mongolia, &c.	689,147	689,150
Poland, ...	2,077,311	2,110,911
Finland, ...	663,658	708,484
Russian colonies in America,	30,761	30,292
Total,	28,896,223	30,237,343
Grand total of both sexes,		59,133,566

The privates of the army and navy, and their wives and children, are not included in either of the above tables; so that the sum total may be estimated, in round numbers, at sixty-one millions. To

this should be added about a million and a half of mountaineers between the Caspian and the Black Sea, and several wandering tribes of Circassians and others, whom it is impossible to number.

The divisions and boundaries of this immense empire have materially varied at different periods. Peter the Great made some important changes in the distribution, which was, nevertheless, remodelled and placed on a permanent footing by Catherine II., in 1775. Her arrangement, nearly, was confirmed and settled, by Alexander, in 1822. The empire is now divided into governments, and *oblasts*, or territories not yet formed into governments. Some of these, particularly in Asiatic Russia, are of great, but unknown extent, and uncertain limits. The best information upon this subject at our command is contained in the above tables.

There can be no fair judgment of the character, temper, or genius of a people, without taking into consideration the circumstances of their late history. Foreigners find fault with us because we have not attained perfection in the arts, sciences, and belles-letters, at the same time while our whole energies have been employed upon the necessary and useful. They describe our national character as they do that of Russia, while we have no national character, not having yet had time to form one; and though the Russians of to-day are no more like the Russians of a century ago than the oak is like the acorn, and no more like what they will be a century hence, than the same oak is like the ship into which it is destined to be fashioned. We laugh at the wedding of a pair of Sandwich islanders, when the bride appears at the altar in a single cotton garment, and the bridegroom *in puris naturalibus*.

We should do better to reflect that, a hundred years since, the grandparents of the happy couple were almost as the beasts that perish, and had no more idea of law or Christianity than a bare-legged Highlandman of the same epoch had of a knee-buckle. Their appearance in a church, in any garb, at least argues an awakened moral sense, and a capacity and desire for improvement.

In the 15th century arose the Cossacks, in the reign of Ivan the Great. The Poles and Lithuanians had conquered the whole of Western Russia to Kiow, and subjected the inhabitants to religious persecution, as well as political oppression, notwithstanding the Polish spirit of toleration, so boasted by Major Tochman. The Crim Tartars beset Russia hard on the east. The discontented, therefore, retired to the fertile and uninhabited Ukraine, and organized themselves into a military community, governed by their own hetmans, under the auspices of Poland. Thus they remained, the bulwark of Poland against the Turks, though oppressed by the oligarchy, till, in John Casimir's time, they took up arms against the Polish governor, simply because he had ravished the wife of Chmielnicki, a man of some influence among them, and burned his house, in the flames of which his infant child perished. Casimir tried conciliation. The Cossack chief withdrew his forces, and negotiations were in progress; but the Polish nobles broke the truce; whereupon the Cossacks defeated them, entered Poland, and invested the king in his camp at Zborow. A peace was then granted by the simple Cossacks, who believed those sincere who had deceived them before so often, when they promised them personal and religious freedom, (1649.)

The foiled and humiliated nobles were not satisfied with this, to them, disgraceful treaty, — if any thing could disgrace them, — and, before the year was out, the diet declared its intention to reduce the Cossacks to obedience. Casimir proclaimed a crusade, and received a consecrated sword and helmet from the pope, and then marched against the Cossacks with 100,000 Polish nobles, and 50,000 foreign troops, trained in the "Thirty Years' War."

The hetman allied himself with the cham of the Tartars, and met this vast armament. He was beaten, and his forces dispersed, and the Cossacks gave themselves to Alexis Michaelowitsch, in 1654, who gladly received his new and voluntary subjects.*

The Cossacks revolted from Poland, rather than be slaves. Under the dominion of Russia, "Free as a Cossack," has become a proverb. It is their boast that they cannot be forced into the service, like refractory Russian conscripts and British seamen. They hold their lands by the military tenure of four years' service, each, in the ranks, which, in time of peace, they perform for a merely nominal pay. Poland turned the scale of her own destiny, when she converted these wild warriors from friends into foes. Russia numbers upwards of 100,000 of them in her countless ranks. At home, the freedom of their institutions surpasses that of the ancient Swiss cantons.

Ivan Vassilievitsch II., surnamed "The Terrible," and "The Tyrant," son of the Great Ivan, first gave the Russians a code of laws. He extended the limits of the empire, and surpassed his

* Chevalier, *Guerre des Cosaques*. Malte-Brun, *Tableau de Pologne*.

father in his efforts for its improvement. In the latter part of his reign, Russia was assailed by Sweden, and Denmark, and Poland, all at once, and only obtained peace with the latter power, by yielding Livonia, (1582,) at the intercession of the Emperor Rodolph II. and Pope Gregory XIII. From this first aggression, perhaps, dates the inveterate hatred entertained by the Russian people against the Poles; a hatred enhanced by the memory of subsequent wrongs, and as rancorous as the conquered Welsh felt for the English people down to the reign of Henry V. This feeling the Russians are at no pains to conceal. It has been handed down to them from generation to generation, and will, doubtless, live for long years to come. It is one of the strongest traits in the national character. Every Russian knows by heart, and triumphantly recites, the menacing lyric of the poet Pushlin, that he addressed to the Polish sympathizers in France.

The Russian pride was severely wounded by the Emperor Alexander's gift of a constitution to the Poles, as it seemed to acknowledge their capacity to enjoy institutions for which the Russians were unfit. How purely imaginary this supposed capacity was, the result has shown; but, when the insurrection of 1830 broke out, the national hate found vent. When Nicholas announced the necessity of taking up arms against Poland to the officers of his army, they drew their sabres, fell on their knees, and, with fearful oaths and imprecations, convinced the emperor that all the severity of martial law and Russian discipline would be needed to save the Poles from extermination.*

* Polytechnic Journal, February, 1842.

The usurper and murderer, Bous Godenov, by stirring up civil strife, and restoring and increasing the privileges of the nobles, well nigh undid all the good that had been done by the two Ivans.

Poland again took part with the impostor Demetrius, in the civil war stirred up in Russia in his name. This man played the same comic, or rather tragic, part enacted before him by the slave Clemens, in the reign of Tiberius, and by Perkin Warbeck, in England, in the reign of Henry VII. The king of Poland (Sigismund) was ashamed to countenance this vagabond; but the Polish aristocracy, who were never ashamed of aught, or asked their sovereign servant's consent to do any thing, seated him on the throne of Russia, on the 21st of July, 1605. He was murdered on the 17th of May following, or, more properly, executed, with 1700 of his Polish adherents; but a second Demetrius sprang up, and a third, and the last impostor was patronized and defended by the Polish oligarchy like the first. Sigismund himself, urged by the Jesuits, concurred with them, sent an army into Russia, in the cause of the second pretender, took Moscow, deposed the Czar Basil Schoueski, who had been elected by the Russians, and drove him into a cloister in Poland, where he died, and again the Poles forced a monarch upon Russia.

Demetrius II. was assassinated by the Tartars; and the Russians, to avoid a new war with which they were threatened by Poland, offered their crown to Wladislas, the son of Sigismund, on condition that he would renounce the Latin and embrace the Greek ritual. The Polish General Zolkiewski advanced to the very walls of Moscow, with an army, and extorted the oath of fidelity to Wladislas from the citizens; but Wladislas himself never came.

We read, with indignation and horror, of the capture of Warsaw and the storming of Prague by Suwarrow, but we do not hear at all of the atrocities perpetrated by Zolkiewski. Six thousand of his troops entered Moscow, and treated its inhabitants with remorseless cruelty. They set fire to several parts of the city; put great numbers of the people to the sword; plundered the treasury, the convents, and the churches, and carried off a prodigious booty, in gold and silver.

When the French eagles perched on the Kremlin, the awful scene that ensued was but a faint repetition of the horrors wrought by the intrusive and invading Poles in 1611. Thus speaks the Russian historian Karamsin: "What words can adequately paint the deplorable state to which Moscow was thus reduced? That populous capital, resplendent with riches and numbers, was annihilated in a single day. There remain only smoking ruins; piles covered with ashes and drenched with blood. You see nothing but corpses, and churches sacked or half devoured by the flames. The awful silence of death is interrupted only by the pitiable lamentations of wretches covered with wounds, a prey to all the agonies of prolonged torture."

By the laws of war, practised and allowed by all nations, an untenable place that holds out, and is carried by assault, undergoes the extremities of fire and sword, if the conqueror so wills it, especially if its resistance has been desperate and bloody. Prague was so taken by Suwarrow, who did not, however, burn Warsaw.

The reason of so stern a proceeding, though harsh, is just. It is to warn garrisons not to cause a useless waste of life by hopeless resistance.

Moscow was not taken by assault by the Poles: they entered it without opposition. Yet Zolkiewski is chronicled in history as a hero, and Suwarrow as a butcher. Why?—the one was a patriotic Pole, the other a Russian barbarian.

The Muscovites, however, having driven Zolkiewski from the empire, elected Michael Fedorowitsch Romanoff, the founder of the present reigning dynasty, with unlimited hereditary power, in 1613. In his reign appeared the third Demetrius, who got possession of Pleskow, and was ultimately beheaded by Alexis, Michael's son and successor, in 1653.

There was war between Russia and Poland, or, rather, by Poland on Russia, during Michael's reign. The Russians besieged Smolensko, and the Poles Moscow, at the same time, till a truce for fourteen years made them desist. The truce not being renewed, the Russians again blockaded Smolensko, till the siege was raised by Wladislas, who gained a complete victory over them. The czar made overtures for peace, which was concluded (in 1634) with the understanding and agreement that Wladislas should forever resign his pretensions to Russia, and content himself with holding the duchies of Smolensk and Severia, as fiefs of the crown of Polaud.

Alexis Michaelowitsch improved his army by the introduction of foreign officers; broke the treaty; recovered Smolensk, Tschernigoff, Belaja, Kiow, and the Ukraine; ravaged Lithuania, and made an inroad into Poland itself. At the same time, he warred on the Turks and Tartars. At one time, he had possession of Volhynia and the greater part of Lithuania; but surrendered them again when peace was concluded. From the Tartars he took

the Crimea. At his death, in 1676, he was at peace with all his neighbors, excepting the Turks.

We suppose we have now accounted for the reciprocal animosity of the Poles and Russians, and shown that the balance of wrong is not in favor of the former. Granting that the Russians have of late years treated the Poles harshly, it must be admitted that it was not without some provocation.

Before Peter's time, (and in what follows we speak only of what was previous to his reign,) it was the practice of the czars to hinder inquisitive persons from all knowledge of their government: some of them banished the sciences from their dominions, and forbade the profession of them under severe penalties. The clergy was as ignorant as the laity: all they knew was, that, as members of the Greek church, they were bound to hate the Latins. Very few indeed of them could make a sermon, even for Russian serfs; and few books could be found, in the richest monasteries, even if there had been any priestly readers. Ignorance, however, is no pacificator; and the clergy quarrelled about points of doctrine in Russia as well as every where else. The chief point of dispute was, whether the laity ought to cross themselves with two fingers or three; and a very serious sedition was got up by one Jacob Nursuff, in Astrachan, about this important matter, in the reign of Feodor III. Even in Peter's time, the theology compulsorily taught in the few cloisters that he did not suppress, savored strongly of the darkness of ages past. One of the subjects of a public theological debate was, whether it was a sin to smoke tobacco, and the disputant in the affirmative contended that it was lawful to get drunk on brandy, but not to smoke,

because it is written that what cometh out of the mouth defileth a man, and that which entereth therein defileth not.*

Another important and equally fiercely contested point was, whether the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father alone, or from the Father and Son united.

The Russians, nobles and slaves, were unquestionably less civilized than the Mexicans and Peruvians in the times of Cortez and Pizarro; and, to keep them in ignorance and insensibility of their yoke, an ancient law forbade them to travel abroad, without permission from the czar or the patriarch, on pain of death. This law flattered their pride, and, like the Chinese, they regarded all other nations as mere "outside barbarians." The conversation of strangers, thought some of the czars, would be *too* instructive, and would teach their subjects to sigh for unreasonable liberty. Even the magnates were not permitted to retire from court, and seldom or never visited their large possessions in the provinces, which they left to the management of stewards. The sovereign himself never married a foreigner, but chose his wife from his nobility, or even among the common people; nor had her relations any special honor, unless during her lifetime.

The general, universal, utter ignorance extended even to almost total neglect of what was requisite to self-preservation; we mean, the art of war. The czar could raise a very large army, indeed, in a very short time, by sending orders to the voevodas, or governors, to furnish their contingents at a stated time and place; but these troops were but the rudest of militia, without discipline or skill in the

* Voltaire, *Histoire de Charles XII.*

use of weapons; and therefore it was they were usually defeated. It was not till the reign of Ivan II. that Russia had a standing army of forty thousand men; viz., the Strelitzes, a disorderly, mutinous, pretorian band, more dangerous to their country and to their master than to the enemy, and a nuisance and a terror to their fellow-subjects. The cavalry was, like the Polish pospolite, just such as France and England had when those kingdoms were assemblages of fiefs. The Russian nobles mounted and armed themselves at their own expense, and fought individually and independently; often with no other arms than the sabre, bow, and quiver.

The command of armies was given to birth, not merit; nor were there any regular general officers. The other officers, from colonels down, were foreign adventurers, fugitives from other countries, brought to Russia by large rewards. Their high pay, and the esteem in which they were held, showed how much the Muscovites were in want of military teachers. As most of them had never been more than private soldiers elsewhere, they were of little use in Russia.

From all these causes, it resulted that, though the Russians extended their dominions to the east and north, among tribes as barbarous as themselves, they could make no impression on the Turks, and were unable to resist the Swedes, or even the paltry Poles. The boyarins were mostly exempted from military service, and looked upon their scandalous exemption as an honor.

The people, forbidden to learn, ignorant of the subdivision of labor, born in slavery, and laboring for their lords instead of themselves, were content with such rude cultivation as enabled them to exist,

and made no improvement, notwithstanding their courage, hardihood, vivacity, penetration, and flexibility of character — qualities that survive in full force in their posterity at the present day. Rich they could not become, nor durst, if they could: even the nobles feared to appear so. The arts are the children of opulence and easy government; what wonder they were strangers to Russia?

The czar had his council of state, whom he consulted when he pleased, and whose counsel he followed when it pleased him. This assembly was composed of his *boyarins*, or hereditary nobles; a few of the gentlemen of his bed-chamber, or *scolnics;* the grand councillors, (*dumni duoranins,*) who were all noble; and three *dumni diacs*, or under-chancellors, advocates of the people, appointed by the czar from the lower orders. These last always stood while the others were seated. All public affairs were considered by this council: foreign emissaries were chosen from it by the sovereign.

There were several courts of justice, called *precauses*, in which the councillors of state, whether boyarins, scolnics, or dumni duoranins, might preside, while the dumni diacs officiated as registers. They decided cases only at the first hearing; after which there was an appeal to the council of state.

The ritual of the Russo-Greek church, of fifty millions of people, now fills twenty folio volumes, in the Sclavonic tongue.

The Empress Catherine and the Emperor Alexander labored wisely and diligently to simplify and to give order and regularity to the administration of the government of Russia; to reduce it to a system that should be, as far as possible, independent of the character or caprice of any future sovereign.

Alexander proclaimed, in 1811, that the law was superior to the sovereign, and gave the senate the right to remonstrate against any ukase they might deem inconsistent with it.

Public business is transacted, under the emperor, by four boards, councils, or colleges.

The emperor's imperial council was established on its present footing in 1810; and consists of a president and an indefinite number of members, among whom the ministers must always be reckoned. It is divided into the departments of legislation, war, civil and religious affairs, finance, and the affairs of Poland; and has the superintendence of every thing connected with the internal administration.

The senate was founded by Peter the Great, and is considered the most important body in the state; being the high court of justice of the empire, and having control of all the inferior tribunals. Its functions, partly deliberative and partly executive, are set forth in a ukase of the 20th of September, 1802. The members are nominated by the emperor, and can, therefore, be but a feeble check on his power. Their number is about a hundred, with a yearly salary of seven thousand rubles each. The senate is divided into eight committees of sections, of which five sit at St. Petersburg and three at Moscow. Each committee has power to decide, in the last resort, upon certain descriptions of cases brought either immediately before it, or by appeal from the inferior tribunals. There are cases, however, in which persons dissatisfied with its decisions may petition to the emperor.

The senators are mostly personages of high rank or station; but some eminent lawyer represents the emperor, and presides in each department. His sig-

nature is essential to the validity of any decision. In the general meeting of the sections, the minister of justice takes the chair, as high procurator.

Beside its supervision of the courts of law, the senate examines the state of the public revenue and expenditure, and has power to inquire into public abuses, and to make a great variety of appointments. Its proceedings are published monthly in the government paper.

The holy synod constitutes the third college, or council of the empire. All its decisions are in the emperor's name, and are of no force till approved by him. There, as with us here, the ecclesiastical is wholly subordinate to the temporal power.

There are eleven ministers, viz., of the imperial household, of war, finance, justice, interior, public instruction, imperial domains, post-offices, public buildings and roads, and the vice-chancellor and comptroller-general. These constitute the fourth college, and they have colleagues who supply their places when sick or absent. They communicate directly with the emperor, or with his private chancery, or executive department, of which more anon.

It has ever been the wise policy of the Russian sovereigns to allow conquered or acquired countries to retain their own laws and institutions, so far as they were not hostile to the empire or its general constitution. Thus Poland has not been deprived of her slavery and aristocracy — the only permanent. fixed institutions she ever enjoyed.

Again, if Russia should ever resolve to follow the example now proposed, and soon to be set, by the United States, and dishonestly and unjustly annex Turkey, or Persia, to her dominions, there will be just as much and as little occasion to sympathize

with the sons of Islam as with the Poles; as they will probably be allowed to retain all their national nuisances, and only exchange one padishah for another. It is vexatious to all the Philhellenes in Christendom, to be sure, to think that the Turks will not, in any case, be driven out of Europe; but, judging of the future by the past, such will assuredly be the lamentable fact.

Finland, Ingria, Esthonia, Livonia, conquered from Sweden by Peter the Great, were allowed to retain their peculiar privileges and institutions for about a century, when they were modified by Alexander, very much for the better. Courland, and the provinces wrested from Poland, enjoyed the same favor till some of them forfeited it by their own folly. Notwithstanding these exceptions, the form of provincial government is sufficiently uniform.

The empire is divided into fourteen general governments, equivalent to vice-royalties, between fifty and sixty governments, and more than three hundred and twenty districts, not including the *oblasts* already mentioned.

The general governors represent the emperor, and, as his representatives, command the forces, and have the supreme control of the affairs of their respective governments, civil and military. All public functionaries within their jurisdictions are responsible, and must make their reports, to them. They sanction or suspend the judgments of the several government courts.

To each civil government there is a civil governor, representing the governor-general or viceroy, and responsible to him. The civil governor is assisted by a council of regency, to which all measures must be submitted. A vice-governor takes the place of the civil governor in case of absence or

sickness. The vice-governor also presides over a council of finance, who manage the estates of the crown and the collection of the revenue. There is also a council of general provision, answering to our overseers of the poor, and having the direction and inspection of all public charities, prisons, work-houses, and schools for the poor: likewise a college, or board of health, which attends to such matters as its designation implies, appoints district physicians, inspects pharmacopœias, &c.

The districts have their local functionaries.

The towns have a municipal body, elected every three years, by the different classes of the population. This looks somewhat like training and preparation for a representative system, which idea is corroborated by the unceasing efforts of the emperors to create a middle class, from Peter the Great down. Each town has also either a bailiff or a commandant, (according to its corporative importance,) appointed by the crown, who has charge of the police, executes sentences, pursues criminals, &c., and has charge of the public buildings and stores.

The Russian judicial system is complicated. There are civil and criminal courts in every circle, and in every government a supreme court, divided into civil and criminal sections. It receives appeals from the lower courts, and its sentence is final in all criminal cases, as well as in all civil questions about sums under five hundred rubles. Higher matters must go to the senate.

We have mentioned the emperor's private chancery. Something like it has existed since the time of Alexis, the father of Peter the Great. The crimes first brought before it were attempts against the emperor's life, against religion, and against the

state; but, at last, it took in all crimes. The process began with the arrest, and sometimes ended with the execution, of the accused. It was a terrible institution, as all secret, irresponsible tribunals must be; but it had this extenuating feature, — if the informer failed to prove his charge, he was knouted three several times; whence it may be inferred, that few men cared to denounce their neighbors falsely. If the accused refused to plead, he was knouted. Was this worse than the *peine forte et dure*, or pressing to death, of English jurisprudence? Both were bad enough, in all conscience. If the judge was not convinced by either party, they were both knouted again, and so on, till their respective guilt or innocence became a question of physical endurance.*

When Peter the Great went to the senate chamber, and found the senators all absent from their posts, he taught them the taste of an imperial flogging, with his own hand, which was not a soft or a light one. Peter III., in a like case, sharply reproved them. Nicholas I., finding that neither blows nor words had availed, organized a secret chancery, to correct the abuses inseparable from the form of government. It is not a part of the laws, but a business he has taken upon himself as an individual; and the institution is called "the Private Chancery of his Majesty the Emperor." It is a system of *espionage* like that of Haroun Alraschid, and precisely similar in its effects.

In this country, where every act and thought is open to the censure and correction of the press and the law, where the law is definite, is almost always executed, and, sometimes, with strict jus-

* Tooke's Life of Catherine II.

tice, we have no idea of the necessity of a secret police in an empire where the great mass are in the darkest ignorance, and where the will of one man is the best and surest guaranty against wrong. Where such is the case, it is unquestionably of the last importance, that the important ONE should know what wrongs are committed; and how is this to be effected, but through the medium of a secret police?

It will be objected that, supposing the emperor to be every thing heart can wish in a ruler, it is impossible for him to be made acquainted with half the wrong that takes place in an empire of sixty millions. It is true that Nicholas cannot possibly know all the misdoings of all his officers; but the fact that no one of them can sin with the certainty that his crime will not reach the imperial ear, and that he is certain it will be punished if it does, must needs be a powerful check upon every individual. Partridge's illustration, of the man with a pistol against a thousand unarmed ones, applies here.

The private chancery has four branches. One watches the senators and other great officers of state; another the courts of law; a third the police; and a fourth the public charities; and each watches all the others. It is, therefore, exceedingly difficult for any public functionary to offend unseen by this million-eyed Argus. Abuses are made known to the emperor almost simultaneously with their commission. Not even the occasional absence of a functionary from his station escapes him. It is needless to say, that the consequent proceedings take place according to equity, and not to rule or precedent.

The burden of this appalling responsibility, the

"despot" meets with order and method. Each hour of his every day has its own work, and Nicholas does it. There is but one opinion of his capacity for business among friends and foes. No fatigue frightens him; nothing is too great for his vision, or small enough to escape it. The imperial censor alike detects the gravest malversation and the most trifling blunder in grammar; and the aberration from honesty or syntax is commonly brought home to the delinquent within twenty-four hours.

On coming home at night, — it may be from a review, it may be from the theatre, — the emperor sits down to his work, and leaves it not till it is done, though day should dawn, the while. It is said that his incessant application to business has impaired his health. For the sake of his millions of subjects, we hope it is not so.

It is curious that, in an absolute monarchy and a land of slavery, the functionaries of all the provincial tribunals should be elective! The superior court of a circle consists of a judge and secretary, and of four assessors, two chosen by the nobles, and two by the burghers. The superior court of justice for a government, which is divided into a civil and criminal chamber, has, in like manner, its president, secretary, and four assessors, the assessors chosen in the same way. It seems to be the principle, and certainly is the practice, in Russia, that some of the judges in every court should be of the same class as the parties on whose cases they are to decide, and should be elected for the purpose by their equals. This is a valuable privilege to the nobles and burghers; but is of no use to the people, whose slavery and ignorance preclude them from profiting by it in the least. Nevertheless, as

their slavery is not utter and remediless, like that of our negroes, — as any Russian serf may become a noble, and as the concentrated effort of the government is steadfastly directed to their exaltation, a brighter day must eventually dawn on them all.

Before the reign of Catherine II., the judges, especially of the lower courts, were wretchedly paid. She increased their salaries. Still, paying judges appointed by favor and removable at pleasure, and without any fixed code of laws to guide them, would not prevent great abuses in the administration of justice. Peter the Great, and most of his successors, tried hard to collect and simplify the laws of the empire, and appointed divers commissions for that purpose; but the task was found too Herculean, till his present majesty took it in hand. Between 1826 and 1833, was published the *Swod Zakonow*, or "Body of Law," digested by the legislative commission, under the emperor's supervision and direction. Considering the difficulty of the undertaking, the lack of assistance, and the short time in which it was accomplished, the creation of the Code Napoleon shrinks into insignificance in comparison with the achievement of this "northern barbarian." The following is an extract from the imperial manifesto published on the completion of the work: —

"Having recognized, on our accession to the throne, the indispensable necessity of introducing into the whole body of the laws of our country a clear and systematic order, we commanded, in an especial manner, that they should be collected, and the collection published entire; and we further announced our will that there should afterwards be taken out from the mass, for the purpose of forming a body of uniform and regular laws, all such

laws as are now in force in our empire, without changing their spirit in the slightest degree — the whole to be strictly pursued on the basis laid down, in the year 1700, by Peter the Great.

"The execution of the first part of this plan was finished in 1830.

"With the aid of the Almighty, and after seven years' assiduous labor, carried on under our personal direction, the accomplishment of the second part is now terminated. From the code of 1649, till the 1st of January, 1832, all the laws promulgated within that period of one hundred and eighty-three years, which have preserved through the changes of time, even to our days, their force and tenor, have been collected and classified according to their nature, only leaving out such clauses as have been repealed by subsequent laws; and with the exception of the regulations of the army by land and sea, and some others hereafter mentioned, all these laws have been arranged in a uniform system, divided into codes according to the principal distinctions of administrative and judiciary affairs. All the laws that have been promulgated after the 1st of January, 1832, or which may be so promulgated in the ordinary march of legislation, will be added every year, in a supplement, to the body of laws, according to the order of the above codes, and with reference to the proper article; so that, the general system of laws being once established, it will preserve its uniformity and identity forever.

"The most pressing and essential wants in the empire, justice and order in the administration, imperiously demand this measure. It guaranties the force and the action of the laws for the present, and establishes a solid basis for their gradual perfectibility in the future. It fulfils, in fine, the wishes

by which our ancestors have been animated for a period, hardly interrupted, of one hundred and twenty-six years."

We opine that the execution of this undertaking places the Emperor Nicholas in a place no step lower than is occupied by the great Peter. Nay, more; if he had, not suppressed, but exterminated, twenty such aristocracies as the Polish nobility, we are resolute that the Swod Zakonow would more than have atoned for all.

The worst feature in the present government of Russia is undoubtedly the maladministration of the code of laws the emperor has given his people.* The multiplication of dishonest lawyers is as great a curse to this country as war, pestilence, or famine. What, then, must be the misery of that country where every man is allowed to practise, qualified or not? We have asked the question — we answer it. It is stated that, in 1826, there were two millions eight hundred and fifty thousand cases before the tribunals of the empire: one of every five adult males must have been at law. The evil must have been enormous, even allowing fifty per cent. for possible exaggeration. Legal proceedings in Russia are said to be dilatory in the extreme. The prohibition of taking fees from suitors is said to be generally disregarded, and it is affirmed that, if justice cannot be defeated, it can at least be indefinitely retarded, by money. This last charge will apply here, among us civilized men, and we are only shielded from the partial application of the first, by public opinion and the guardian power of the press; for high salaries will not put all judges above bribery. When the emperor ordered a report on the

* Polytechnic Journal, Feb. 1842.

inferior magistrates to be drawn up for his examination, with special command that those who made a traffic of justice should be pointed out, the document began thus: "Corruption exists among *all the judges, without exception.*"

It remains for the Emperor Nicholas to complete his noble work by the training, selection, and payment of judges, and by bringing public opinion to bear upon them; for his own eye, keen as it is, cannot see every thing; and all this we have confidence in him to believe that he will do, should his life be spared long enough: the past is a guaranty for the future.

The question, therefore, was not the dismissal of the incompetent and corrupt; but the adoption of a radical new system. Supposing the stipends of the incumbents had been augmented; would that have improved their integrity? Certainly not; and there was no alternative but to remould and remodel every thing — the laws, and the judges appointed to dispense them. It has, to a considerable extent, been done by the new code, in which the emperor was chiefly indebted to the assistance of Speranski, a counsellor of state.

The police of Russia were formerly very numerous, and are still very effective. They have various powers, not involved in their ordinary functions; such as to decide differences between masters and servants, &c. Crime is not so frequent in Russia as in most other nations of Europe, and property is as well protected there as elsewhere.

Whatever the number of the police employed in Russia may have been, even so late as ten years ago, (and all travellers agree that it was very great,) every American reader will be astonished to learn that it does not now exceed two thousand men, throughout

the whole vast empire. Incredible as the fact may appear, it has been verified by reference to the government estimates. The police minister, Count Beckendorf, has the superintendence of all police regulations, and is, at the same time, director-general of the imperial gendarmerie. As minister of the police, he plans its measures, and, as commandant of the gendarmes, he enforces them; and yet the force at his disposal is neither more nor less than two thousand men.*

Treason is the only crime punished with death in Russia; for other such crimes as are atoned capitally in other Christian countries, the criminal undergoes the knout, and is condemned to labor for life in the mines of Siberia. The commutation does not please the peasantry: the Russians have been used to brutal treatment for so many ages; laziness, the necessary concomitant of slavery, is so ingrained into their system, that, though they shrink not from the knout, they prefer death to labor in the mines. The greatest difficulty Catherine II. found in the abolition of the torture was the opposition of those most liable to it; and, when Stephen Bathory would have deprived the Lithuanian nobles of the privilege of flogging their serfs, the serfs themselves besought him, "that his majesty would graciously be pleased to make no innovations." Submission is so much a second nature to them, that a drunken Russian will crave the forgiveness of any foreigner for his intoxication, and will not leave him till he has obtained it. "During the Easter diversions," says Kohl, "I once saw a drunken man take off his hat in the public market-place before the governor, fall on his knees, and seize his hand, saying, 'Ah! I am drunk, your excellency! — it is a holiday to-day;

* Polytechnic Journal, Feb. 1842.

let me be flogged: I have drunk too much; I beseech your excellency to let me be punished;' and the governor could not get away till he had given the man a sharp reprimand."

It would seem, therefore, that any endeavor to elevate the Russian serfs, generally, must be up-hill work.

CHAPTER VIII.

RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS. — ANECDOTE OF PETER THE GREAT. — RUSSIAN CHURCHES. — THE KNOUT.

The patriarch, once supreme in all ecclesiastical affairs, was elected by the metropolitans, the archbishops, the bishops, and the inferior clergy, from among the monks of St. Vassili, subject to the confirmation of the czar. Once, he depended on the see of Constantinople. It belonged to the patriarch to crown the czar, and to regulate all spiritual affairs, by the ecclesiastical tribunals, which were held in his name. He was styled proto-archimandrite of the order of St. Vassili. The pomp and grandeur of this prelate were all but incredible. On Palm-Sunday, his day of solemn procession, the czars led his horse on foot, in their imperial purple, while the people fell prostrate before him, like Tartars before the grand lama.

The power of the patriarch was almost equal to the czar's. God and St. Nicholas were the primary objects of the people's adoration, and after them the czar and the patriarch, who could inflict the most inhuman tortures, and pass sentence of death, without appeal.

Next the patriarch ranked the metropolitans of Novgorod, Kasan, Rostow, and Sark; then came the archbishops of Vologda, Tver, Astrachan, Siberia, Archangel, and Pskof; and after them the bishops of Viatka and Colunona. There were about fifty archimandrites, or abbots, and a prodigious number of proto-papas (provosts) and papas, (priests.)

The Christian precepts read, and the psalms sung, in the churches, were in Sclavonian, very few of the clergy knowing Latin. Any baptism but triple immersion was held of no avail. They received the eucharist in both kinds, and administered it to children of seven years, whom they thought capable of sin at that age. They rejected the doctrine of purgatory, but held with confession, the sign of the cross, processions, and many other ceremonies of the Catholic church. Confession, however, was only practised after the commission of enormous crimes, when absolution appeared necessary to the sinner, but not repentance. The benediction of the papa once obtained, he believed himself pure in the sight of Heaven. Thus the Russian transgressor left the confessional to cut a throat or pick a pocket; and what to other Christians was a curb and a restraint, was to him an encouragement to persevere in iniquity.

They had a great many fasts, which they observed very rigidly. They would not even drink milk on fast days; but heads of families, girls, married women, and the papas themselves, made no scruple of getting drunk at other times. This will not be considered incredible if we refer to the "spiritual regulation" of Peter the Great. It seems, it was common for men to marry in drunken frolics — the time when a Russian is peculiarly, characteristically, and nationally, loving and affectionate. In such cases, the sobered and repentant sinner was admonished by the regulation not to marry a second wife before he had laid the matter before a papa. "But if the priest himself," proceeds the regulation, "happens to be in the same predicament, the matter must go before the Spiritual College."

It also appears, from the same instrument, that hundreds took priests' orders solely that they might revel in drunkenness and debauchery; and the bishop was specially enjoined to ascertain, before ordaining a candidate, that he was not a vagabond, or superstitious, or a huckster of pictures of the saints, which priests were allowed to barter, but not to sell for money. The law is still extant; but as wholly disregarded in Russia as the license law in Boston and New York. There is no difference, in this respect, even in "holy" Moscow, between the saint-market and the fish-market.*

To account for this, it is necessary to state that every family has the pictures of its tutelar saints conspicuously placed in its apartments; and if the visitor happens not to perceive them, he immediately asks for the saints, whom he salutes before the master of the house. The most ardent lover dares not receive a kiss from his mistress, be the moment never so critical, without first covering the saints, that they may not be scandalized. These saints were, and perhaps are, carried to funerals; and it was usual for the metropolitan to put into the coffin a certificate, addressed to St. Nicholas, of the upright walk and conversation of the deceased; now, it is a prayer and confession of faith.

It was common and general for private individuals to hang up these pictures in the churches, while they still reserved to themselves a private right of property in the saint. They placed him there, because they could not afford him a suitable temple themselves, without any notion of his listening to the prayers of others. If, therefore, they caught a neighbor adoring him, they were indig-

* Leitch Ritchie.

nant at the trespass, and did not always limit their resentment to cursing and reviling. Sometimes, they even sought damages at law. The scandal this practice occasioned was the cause that private pictures were removed from the churches, and the more enlightened church party consoled themselves, for the presence of those that remained, with the reflection that pictures did not come within the mischief of the second commandment.

There were, and are, images in some of the churches, however, though it does not appear that they were ever worshipped. There was a miraculous one, of the Virgin, in the church of the Trinity. This virgin was said to weep at the changes the energy of Peter was effecting. But Peter was not a man to be wept from his purposes. He paid the church a visit; and at his nigh approach, the disconsolate virgin wept like another Niobe. After gravely regarding the indisputable miracle, the czar coolly stepped up to the pedestal, and lifted the lady's head-gear. The top of the head came off with it, and lo! the head contained a basin filled with water to the level of the eyes. The pedestal was purposely made rickety, and whenever it was shaken by an advancing foot, the water trickled from the small punctures in the Madonna's eyes. "That is, indeed, a very fine image," said the czar, as he gravely readjusted the miracle, and turned away. Punishment was unnecessary, or rather, the exposure was sufficient punishment. McCulloch is wrong in stating that "all statues, bas-reliefs," &c., are rigidly excluded from the Russo-Greek churches. Leitch Ritchie saw an image of the Virgin in the cathedral church of the Assumption at Moscow, and many others. There is an image of St. Nicholas in the Kremlin at Nikol-

skoi gate. The stranger who forgets to uncover to this image risks having his hat pulled from his head.

The bishops were also to observe "whether priests and deacons, and the lower ecclesiastics, frequented brothels, or were noisy in the streets when drunk, or, what is worse, whoop and halloo in their drink in church, &c.; or, what is intolerably shameful, whether they fight in the *boikulachni*," (a sparring match in the streets with gloves, of which the peasants were very fond.)*

That the clerical profession is not a guaranty of sobriety in Russia, even to this day, appears from the following extract from a letter from M. de Sabouref to the Rev. Mr. Venables, author of "Domestic Scenes in Russia."

"The Russian peasant is deeply imbued with a reverence for religion, and is not so much superstitious as thoroughly ignorant. He kisses the hand of his parish priest, but he laughs at his failings, and is quite able to make the distinction between the man and his office. Of this I can give you a very characteristic anecdote. Passing one day near a large group of peasants, who were assembled in the middle of the village, I asked them what was going forward.

"'We are putting the father into a cellar.'

"'Into a cellar!' I replied; 'what are you doing that for?'

"'O,' said they, 'he is a sad drunkard, and has been drunk this whole week; so we always take care every Saturday to put him in a safe place, that he may be fit to officiate at church next day; and on Monday he is at liberty to begin drinking again.'"

* Leitch Ritchie.

It would seem, too, that the piety of the Russian peasantry is very much on a par with that of the same class in most Catholic countries. A petty trader had occasion to call on an English merchant on the evening of St. Nicholas's day. The Englishman told him to call "to-morrow." "To-morrow!" cried the indignant Russ; "why! you are worse than an infidel. The very Tartars will spend all the money they have to-morrow in getting drunk to the honor of St. Nicholas!" *

Kruilow, the Russian Æsop, gives us the following fable, illustrative of the way in which the Russian fasts are kept. "The injunction is, 'Ye shall not eat any kind of flesh on fast days, nor shall ye boil eggs in water upon your hearths, and eat such eggs.' A peasant who had no notion of denying himself eggs on a strict fast day, drove a nail into the wall, and hung an egg upon it by a wire, under which he set a lighted lamp, and so cooked it. Being caught in the act by the priest, he alleged that he had not supposed he was breaking the commandment. 'The devil must have taught you that!' cried the indignant priest. 'O yes, father,' replied the offender, 'forgive me, and I will confess; the devil did teach it to me.' 'That's a lie!' roared the devil, who had been chuckling at the eggs behind the stove, 'I did not teach him, father, indeed; for, on my sacred honor, I never heard of the trick till now.'"

This is but a fable; but if evasion of the church's commands had not been common, Kruilow never would have written it.

But what if there were, what if there are ignorance and drunkenness among the Russo-Greek clergy? Has there been none in the Catholic priesthood, or

* Richardson.

the Church of England? Were it not better that drunkenness (not to speak of ignorance, of which we have no lack at home) were prevalent among the American clergy, than that we should open with every mail an account of some adultery or other crime committed by some American servant of the altar? Let us look at home before we deride the Russian clergy! and let all Christendom do the same.

Amidst all their ignorance and superstition, among all their ridiculous customs and ceremonies, the Russians had some that were significant and instructive. They crowned newly-married persons with wormwood, emblematic of the bitterness of marriage, and sprinkled them with hops, the type of fruitfulness. They covered the bride's eyes with a veil, to signify that she ought to be blind to her husband's faults. Their laws did not forbid bigamy; yet the few who practised it were looked upon as the shame and dishonor of their families.

The worst trait of former Russian barbarism, however, was the low estimate placed on the better sex. Travellers tell us (and they are too numerous and too unanimous to be all and altogether in error) that they considered female virtue to be like *sal volatile*, only to be preserved by close confinement; and therefore enjoined their wives and daughters to stay always within doors, and abstain from all conversation with men. The more rude and uncouth the woman, they thought, the better the wife. The husband might kill her by immoderate correction — which assuredly is a certain way to correct any body — without incurring the penalty of the law. They might put them away for barrenness, and compel them to enter the cloister; and yet the Russian wives were generally proud of

their husbands' jealousy and brutality. We could scarcely believe this, if we had not seen Irishmen tried for beating their wives. It was not till the beginning of Peter's reign that fathers stipulated, in marriage contracts, that their daughters should not be starved or unmercifully cudgelled. Women who destroyed their tyrants were set in the ground and starved to death; and we may believe that where such was the lot of women, this horrid punishment was often incurred.

There seems to have been very little Christianity in Russia, as the word is now understood, till the seventeenth century. It is a little singular that a despotic prince should have been its apostle. We do not wonder that the Russian clergy of his day did not canonize him; though he did more for Christianity than St. Augustin, St. Patrick, or St. Andrew; but he will one day be canonized in the hearts of all sincere Russian Christians; indeed, he is already. At some future time, too, the people of Poland will erect a statue to the Emperor Nicholas — we do not mean the nobility.

Peter's spiritual regulation directed the Spiritual College to "compare the history of saints, whether some of them were not lying devices, or fabulous and ridiculous stories." Such things, he thought, ought to be discountenanced; the more, that "especially the simple folk can scarce distinguish the right hand from the left; but firmly and pertinaciously maintain whatever they see written in a book." He also condemned the superstition that forbade working on Friday, lest Panitza (the Venus of heathen Russia) should be angry. This goddess walked in the ecclesiastical processions of Little Russia, even at that time, in the guise of a woman with dishevelled hair, and was led into the churches to be worshipped by the people.

It was a current belief that a man buried in the Pecherskoi monastery would be saved, even if he had died impenitent. In another place, it was the custom to pray before an oak, and the papa shook the boughs over the people's heads, as he pronounced the benediction. The college was also commanded to inquire into the "infinite number of fables" about holy relics.

Certain bishops, being in want of money, placed an image in a desert, and pretended that it wrought miracles. The regulation emphatically condemned their conduct.

"The bishop," says the regulation, "ought to command his servants to behave themselves orderly and soberly in the cities and monasteries he visits, and to commit no outrage; especially not to exact from monks and popes too great a quantity of meat and drink for themselves, or of provender for their horses; especially that they attempt not to rob, on pain of being severely chastised; for the servants of bishops are usually a dissolute herd; and when they observe their lord to have any authority, like wild Tartars they impudently fall to pillage."

It was the custom of the choristers to sing several hymns at the same instant, to save time, and for the priests, when summoned to the sick beds of people of little note, to send them their prayers in the messenger's hat.

Richardson, the author of "Anecdotes of Russia," who travelled in the reign of Catherine II., relates a laughable anecdote of this kind of projectile prayer. — "At Easter, after Lent, the Russo-Greek Christians indulge in the wildest revelry; but not till the parish priest has taken off the obligation to fast, and blessed the house at each of

its four corners. It so chanced that, in raising the injunction in a certain village, the priest purposely passed the door of a parishioner who had offended him, without stopping. The man, on his return home, finding himself neglected, consulted with his wife, who was no better pleased to eat fish and keep sober, while their neighbors were feasting or getting drunk, than he was; and the best method their conjugated wisdom could devise to get out of the dilemma was, to make the pastor a present of a fine goose.

"It so chanced that the papa had gone to another village, where he was to officiate the next morning, and it was impossible to return and bless the house. Nevertheless, the goose was a temptation irresistible, and sharpened his ingenuity. He took the peasant's cap, breathed four blessings in it, replaced it on his head, and told him to hasten back and shake it, upside down, at each corner of the cabin, and that should be his dispensation."

It was the custom in Lent to give theatrical representations of the resurrection in the churches, where Christ, and the women to whom he showed himself, were duly represented.

In one part of the regulation, we think we see Hamlet directing the players: "A preacher has no need to tug and heave, as if he were tugging at the oar in a boat. He has no need to clap his hands — to set his arms a-kimbo — or to bounce, or spring, or to giggle and laugh; or any reason for howlings and hideous lamentations."

Such were the manners of the Russian priesthood a century ago; for, with whatever distrust we may regard the statements of travellers, there is no rebutting the testimony of Peter the Great. Their manners, at least, have since undergone much

improvement. During the three months that Leitch Ritchie was "industriously frequenting every kind of assembly of the people, he never saw an ecclesiastic otherwise than respectable, either in his dress or conduct." This, however, is only the church keeping pace with the general spread of civilization. It does not appear that a papa gains any additional respect by sobriety, nor is he more familiarly received in the houses of the upper classes than formerly.

The monks of St. Vassili engrossed all the ecclesiastical preferments; but the lower clergy were of and with the people, and, of course, their character was that of the people. In this, they were unlike the Polish clergy, who were of the nobility, and, having no feeling or interest in common with the people, did nothing to ameliorate their condition. Early travellers, when they deplored the degradation of the clergy, were not aware that they were describing the whole people. The ignorance of church and lay being equal, there could be little reciprocal improvement.

The mighty intellect of Peter always grasped the truth at once. While he reformed the church government, and the morals of the clergy, he saw that this was enough, and that it was inexpedient and unsafe to attack any point of their doctrine. There was a great outcry against his reforms among the lower clergy, whose vices he attacked. Peter, nevertheless, put down whatever was injurious in the conduct of the papas with a strong hand; but he was tolerant to what did no harm.

He cudgelled the papas with his own imperial hand; but he did not venture to attack the pictures of the saints; their presence in the houses of the peasants injured no one; they were as dear to the

people as their beards. He spared them, though his synod petitioned to have them removed from the churches. Nicon, the patriarch, destroyed himself by interfering with these popular gods.

Such was once the state of religion, and the church, in Russia; and it does not appear that they have improved in any thing like an equal degree with the other institutions of the empire: yet —

The Greek creed has about 50,000,000 of votaries in Russia. The principal points in which it differs from the Roman church are, its denial of the pope's authority, spiritual and temporal; its enjoining church and lay to study the Scriptures in the vernacular, and its prohibition of celibacy in the clergy. This latter requisition is carried to the length that no priest can discharge any spiritual function before he is married, or after he becomes a widower. He is not, however, allowed to marry a second time, and, therefore, his sacerdotal character and his wife expire together, unless he is specially licensed to continue to officiate by his bishop. A widowed priest has, in recompense, the barren consolation of being permitted to enter a monastery, and never to aspire to the highest dignities of the church.

The Russian church was subordinate to that of the Eastern empire, and received its patriarch from the metropolitan of Constantinople, as we have already said, till that city was taken by the Turks; after which, the Russian clergy made their own nomination, always from among the monks of St. Vassili. This state of things continued till Peter the Great declared himself the head of the church, and appointed a holy synod to govern it; which still continues.

The clergy are either secular or regular — the

former comprising the parochial priesthood, and the latter the high ecclesiastical dignitaries, monks, &c. The hierarchy is composed of bishops, archbishops, and metropolitans, and there are thirty-eight dioceses in all.

No country in Christendom has so many fine churches as Russia. The meanest village has its temple, with gilt dome and spire. These edifices are almost all substantially built of brick, in the Grecian style of architecture, plastered and painted with much care and taste, in striking contrast with the dwelling-houses. Throughout Russia, there are almost 500 cathedrals and about 29,000 churches belonging to the established faith, which give employment to about 70,000 clergymen. Moreover, there are over 550 convents, of which 70 are for women. Each church has a lofty belfry, and large bells, of which the Russians are immoderately fond. A chime of fine ones may be found in every steeple, to be rung several times during every service, and without intermission on holidays.

In Russia, as in every other Christian country, the piety or superstition of individuals had greatly enriched the monasteries. Peter the Great availed himself of the abuses this occasioned to deprive them of their wealth; and Catherine II. completed the degradation of the clergy by appropriating the whole immovable property of the church to the use of the state, and assigning pensions to the functionaries to whom it had belonged, in its stead.

Still, with the exception of a few livings in Moscow and St. Petersburg, the stipends of the clergy, even with the perquisites of their functions, and the offerings of the people, are insufficient to support them comfortably. The whole number of the established clergy is about 254,000; and so

small is the sum appropriated to pay them, that they are almost wholly dependent upon their flocks, as, perhaps, they should be. The income of the senior metropolitan, the chief of the hierarchy, did not, lately, exceed 600 or 700 pounds a year, and an archimandrite, or abbot, got but 180 or 225 dollars.* Beside the "surplice fee," which, in rich benefices, may amount to 90 annual dollars, and, in poor ones, to 20, they have but a wooden house, not much better than those of their parishioners, and a little land, which they cultivate with their own hands. The highest dignity they can attain—unless they become widowers—is that of prototype of a cathedral, with a salary of about 90 dollars a year.† While such is their depression, we need not wonder at the grossness or vulgarity of the great bulk of the clergy, which is not, however, more glaring in them than in the itinerant gospellers of Great Britain and the United States.

The severity of the climate of the northern parts of Russia, and the inferior grade of the clergy in the social scale, make it customary for the Russian nobility to celebrate those religious ceremonies which, in other countries, are performed in churches, in their houses. On such occasions, it is an important point that the rank of the officiating priest should correspond with that of the master of the house. For a simple gentleman, for example, a deacon may do; but a prince, or a senator, must have a bishop.

None but the sons of clergymen are educated for the church, and the instances are exceedingly rare of persons belonging to any other class enrolling themselves among the secular clergy. The regu-

* Pinkerton's Russia. † Coxe.

lar, or dignified clergy, on the contrary, often receive recruits from among the nobility and other classes.

Orders, and other marks of distinction, are conferred on the regular clergy, and a bishop who has not the star and ribbon of some order of knighthood is little regarded.

The invocation of saints, as mediators, subordinate to Christ, is enjoined.

The mysteries, or sacraments, are seven.

Baptism is performed on the eighth day after birth, and never, on any account, repeated. It is held so important, that, if there be no priest at hand, any person may perform the rite. Chrism is anointing with oil, immediately after baptism, and is called "the seal of the gift of the Holy Ghost." The priest, in anointing the child, makes the sign of the cross on his forehead, eyes, nostrils, mouth, ears, breast, hands, and feet, repeating at each sign, "The seal of the gift of the Holy Ghost." The child's hair is then cut crosswise. The priest wraps up some locks of it in wax, and throws them into a pond. After seven days, the young Christian is brought back to be publicly washed by him.

Transubstantiation is one of the doctrines of the Russo-Greek church; only the wine must be mixed with warm water, the bread must be sopped in it, and the mixture must be exhibited with a spoon. The priests take the elements separately. The table-cloth is consecrated by a bishop, and must have some particle of the relics of a martyr woven into the web.

The other sacraments are marriage, confession, ordination, and extreme unction.

Marriage has two consecutive parts, the espou-

sals, and the matrimonial coronation. At the espousals, the priest places rings on the fingers of the parties, with many prayers, and the paranymphus shifts them from the one to the other. At the coronation, the priest crowns them with a tin, or silver crown, (it was formerly with flowers,) saying, "The servant of God is crowned for the handmaid of God, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." The mutual cup is then given; they walk three times in a circle; the crowns are taken off, and they salute each other. In eight days, they return to the church, and their crowns are "dissolved" by prayer.

If the Russo-Greek creed promotes agricultural labor by enjoining a vegetable diet on its professors for fifteen or sixteen sure days in the year, their calendar is singularly unfavorable to the improvement of agriculture. The Russian peasants regulate their whole lives, and especially the acts of their domestic economy, by the calendar, and not by the laws of nature. Cattle are turned out, for example, not when there is grass for them to eat, but on St. Stephen's day, when the priest sprinkles them with holy water, and blesses them, by which they are, no doubt, greatly benefited. To insure the countenance of St. Gregory, they begin ploughing on his day, no matter whether the season be backward or forward, or what the weather is. Apples are gathered, not when they are ripe, but on the festival of the Virgin, in August. Before that, apples are poisonous, but, afterwards, green fruit will not hurt a child at the breast; and if it dies of flux or inflammation, "why, it was God's will, and there is nothing more to be said about it." The drovers of the south (*tschumaks*) all set out on Shrove Tuesday, because the roads are then good; and

about the first of October, they return home, because, after Pakrowi, (a festival at that time,) it is not safe to be abroad, on account of evil spirits. Travelling is regulated in the same way, winter and summer.*

Coxe tells us that, when he was in Russia, many of the priests could not read the gospel they preached, even in their own language. Such gross ignorance is not common now. The duties of the Russian clergy are exceedingly laborious. Dr. Pinkerton says that a peculiar degree of culture and good manners is to be found in the family circle of the parochial clergy, who form a distinct caste, as they necessarily must, from the circumstances before stated.

Hear this, ye who run to the second hour. A Russian sermon has one merit, that almost atones for any vulgarity and ignorance that can be imagined in the preacher — it is invariably short; the longest does not exceed a quarter of an hour.

There are about seventy sects of dissenters, or Raskolniks, or heretics, who are all tolerated, though no member of the established church is permitted to forsake his religion. When one of its members marries a person of another creed, the children must all be reared in the established faith.

One sect of Russian dissenters renounces labor, in order to be in readiness to receive the Holy Ghost when he comes. In another, every man baptizes himself, believing that there is nobody in the world holy enough to perform the rite. Some believe that Antichrist has come, and put an end to all righteousness in the church; others deem it meritorious to starve themselves to death. The most

* Kohl.

numerous of the Raskolnicks are the Old and the Anti-Ceremonialists, these wishing to incorporate the rites of Judaism with Christianity, and those to strip Christianity of all ceremonial.

The Anti-Ceremonials profess to be sprung from the loins of Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego. They will have no icons, ceremonies, churches, or holy-days; all times and places being to them equally holy. They meet and sup in each other's houses, like Christ and his disciples, praying, hymning, and expounding, women as well as men. They preach, pray, or sing, standing, sitting, or lying down, just as the fancy strikes them.

Thus far these sectaries mainly agree with the disciples of Silas Lamson and Abby Folsom, in this country; but in other respects there is a difference. Their property is in common, and the only punishment they inflict is expulsion from their society. If a husband wishes to leave his wife, or a wife her husband, they give them a share of the common property, and bid them go in peace. They hold the story of the Christian atonement to be merely symbolical, and as having no meaning but in a spiritual sense. Christ, they maintain, must be born, grow up, teach, suffer, and die, in us. Baptism is the same thing as regeneration, and takes place inwardly. When Christ, which is the word of God, sinks into the heart, the communion is received; as for the bread and wine, they hold it absurd to pretend that it does more than nourish the body. Fasting from food is folly; abstinence from sin is the true Lent of the righteous. Marriage is not a sacrament, but a mere verbal contract. If a woman is seduced, the seducer must either marry her, or quit the society. Death is merely a change, and not for the worse. They believe also in future rewards and punishments.

There is one thing in this country, which we abhor as a land of slavery, that is worthy of the commendation of all the world, and of our especial imitation. In its temples, all ranks, bond and free, stand in the presence of God as equals and as brethren. There is no "nigger pew" in the north-east corner of the gallery, for the serf to peep out of at the altar; the flesh and blood of the Redeemer is not carried to him apart. "The princess rears her haughty head, or bends it with graceful condescension; and the poor *mujik*, clasping his hands upon his chest, bows his body almost to the earth before her who but a moment before was his equal and his sister." Take physic, southern brethren! take physic, Russian physic, fellow-Christians of Boston!

There are many among us who will be satisfied, in theory, with nothing less than the absolute competence of men for self-government under any and all circumstances. There are others, who will fling up their caps, and shout "hurrah for liberty," whenever they hear the triumph of Texan cut-throats, Polish conspirators, or Hibernian peep-o'-day boys, just as they huzzaed for Jackson twelve years ago; just as they huzza for Clay or Polk now; just as the English mob huzza for every royal baby additional they have to maintain; just as negroes huzza for the 4th of July, without knowing why or wherefore. You shall easily find a nullifier indignant that the Russian serf has not a vote in public affairs, who, nevertheless, will sell his own serf at public outcry, to pay a gambling debt; it will not be hard to find an abolitionist inveighing justly against the wholesale robbery and oppression committed by Texas and the British in China, who denounces the emperor of Russia as a slave-holder, while at the same time he deplores the hard fate of the Polish martyrs

of liberty; you will readily find a thousand democratic champions of the liberty and equality of (white) mankind, here or in Russia, who are not in the least aware that three of themselves weigh even, in the political scale, with five black beasts of draught and burden, in the Southern States. How shall we convince any of these creatures of impulse that the government of Russia is not to blame for not forcing freedom on millions who never knew the meaning of the word, who never dreamed of an effort to attain the thing? How shall we make them sensible that the Emperor Nicholas knows almost as much as they do, that he deplores the existing evils of his nation as much as the most enthusiastic advocate for liberty can, and that he has done, and is doing, all that even an emperor of Russia can, to emancipate his people, and fit them for a share in his government?

We have no justification to offer for the man who holds property in his brother man, against the latter's will, for a single moment, or who takes the fruits of his sweat without rendering him a fair equivalent. But does the reader remember a single instance in history, where a nation of slaves have simultaneously thrown off their chains, who, before they wrought themselves into a republic, did not go through the school and ordeal of arbitrary rule?

Rome reached despotism under the Cæsars; but had not virtue enough at any time to become free.

Did the mass of Englishmen attain a representative form of government without the training of centuries, or without submitting to the despotism of Cromwell? The reign of Cromwell was the zenith of England's glory.

What was the consequence when the long-suffer-

ing people of France broke their yoke at a blow, and waded through seas of blood to — what? Freedom? — no. No! the splendid despotism of Napoleon. That despotism, however, prepared them for such freedom as they now enjoy.

What might have been our fate, when we gave Andrew Jackson the purse and the sword, and set him above the law and the constitution, if he had not *happened* to be a good man?

What have been the consequences of our admitting to the elective franchise foreigners quite as unfit to enjoy it as any serf in Russia? ay, less fit; for the Russian serf is, excepting on holidays, sober, and never turbulent or quarrelsome. Let the history of the last twelve years answer; and if the advent of a handful of barbarous bog-trotters has produced such evils among a far greater number of civilized men, trained to self-government for two centuries, what would be the consequence, we do not say of emancipating, but of putting the reins of government into the hands of upwards of forty millions of equally ignorant serfs?

We think that, considering the condition of all classes of the Russian nation, the present form of government is better adapted to its wants than any other that human wisdom could substitute in its stead. The unlimited power of the sovereign, in its unity, is, as it has been directed for more than a century, the best guaranty for its civilization, and for the greater improvement and greater good of the greater number. Had the nobles any share in the government, or any political power, God knows where tyranny and oppression would stop; perhaps at the limits they had reached before the reign of Ivan the Great; perhaps where they now halt in the territory beyond Mason and Dixon's line.

What Poland was, Russia would be. As it is, it is the emperor's interest to exalt the people, and the people's interest to sustain the emperor. He is the palladium of their rights; they, of his authority. No cloud intercepts the Russian peasant's view of the sun. Civilization is rapidly extending under the emperor's fostering encouragement; slaves are fast decreasing in number; and freemen are taking their places. The emperor has nothing to fear from his slaves, and but one thing to fear from the nobles — assassination — the universal weapon of oligarchy.

A representative form of government, constituted as Russian society now is, would be but creating another aristocracy; putting power into the hands of a comparatively small class; and would fit Russia as ill as absolute monarchy would fit the United States.

From the chilly and desert character of half of its extent, and from associating its very name with exile and suffering, we are apt to regard Siberia in the light that we do the sands of Sahara, or the snows of Greenland, — as a land almost uninhabitable, and doomed to everlasting desolation. Nevertheless, though this is true of a part of its surface, it is by no means so of the whole. Its southern districts are of vast extent, are watered by large navigable rivers, and equal great part of Europe and North America in agricultural advantages. The immense plains that stretch eastward along the banks of the Amour are capable of subsisting all the people of Christendom in comfort and abundance. There are traces of a much more dense population, than is now to be found in them, having once inhabited there; but the waste steppes that separate them from other regions, and the fact that most of their rivers flow

into the Frozen Ocean, has hitherto prevented any considerable population from occupying them. Let the reader look at the map, and he will see that the navigation of the River Amour by steam is destined to effect a mighty change in this country. It is true that the mouth of the Amour belongs to the Celestial Empire; but what of that? After having seen Queen Victoria cram the celestials with opium without remonstrance, he must be very squeamish, indeed, who can complain of an emperor of Russia for obtaining possession of an advantage indispensable to so great a part of his dominions — peaceably if he can, forcibly if he must.

"I found the wretches about to commence their march," says Leitch Ritchie, "in a temporary depot. A long chain secured both legs at the ankles. A great many were Jews, most of them *mujiks*, (peasants, who have their lords' permission to reside in towns.) Some carts were near, filled with their wives and children, and some of their male relations stood beside them unmanacled, who had petitioned to be permitted to share their exile."

Very gloomy, indeed; and, if the reader will take the trouble to call at the jail in Leverett Street, he may often see men there in chains, waiting for the carriage that is to convey them to the state prison.

We do not suppose a field negro in Georgia or South Carolina would much care whether he felt the taskmaster's whip in one country or another. So it is with the *mujik:* he is born to labor, and must continue in servitude, whether he goes to Siberia or stays in Europe. Accordingly, the mere fact of transportation is not regarded by them as a severe punishment, especially as their families are allowed to accompany them, if they will — a mercy that is not granted to our own serfs, who are only criminal in a dark skin.

Condemnation to the mines is what the Russian dreads, and with reason, as it is the substitution for capital punishment, and is, perhaps, more severe; for it is better to die in a few minutes, than to be several years about it. It is precisely the operation of our own principle of false humanity that snatches a man from the gallows to imprison him for life at hard labor. In our opinion, death would be preferable.

We hear terrible tales of the knout, and of the mines of Siberia, from the Polish exiles, and, indeed, from a great many other sources, just as we hear of the wolves in the western prairies, which, by the way, are never known to harm the human race. Now, we are free to admit that being flogged nearly or quite to death is a very uncomfortable thing, whether it happen in Russia and Poland, or in the British and American army and navy; and we believe it happens as often to British and American soldiers and sailors as it does to Russian criminals. But 200 strokes of the knout are given to a Russian murderer: we have known four times that number inflicted in the American army, for desertion. We admit, too, that labor on the tread-mill, or in the Siberian mines, is alike unfavorable to human health and longevity. Still, we think — nay, we are sure — that all these horrors have been grossly exaggerated. Call the punishment of the knout, what it simply is, a whipping, and most of its terrors vanish.

The knout is, indeed, a barbarous and revolting punishment; but it is only inflicted in cases of enormous guilt, such as parricide, robbery accompanied with murder, &c. Even then, it gives the criminal about the same chance for his life that a British seaman has who is flogged through the fleet. The knout is never inflicted without a formal trial.

The *batoags* is a punishment inflicted with more or less severity for minor misdemeanors, and is precisely the same thing as the Turkish or Chinese bastinado. Almost every traveller has confounded this infliction with the knout, and hence our horrible idea of Russian cruelty.

Here, now, is one of the raw-head-and-bloody-bone stories so easily fabricated, and so easily swallowed by the gullible, sympathetic public. It was copied from the "Gazette de Cologne" into almost all the American and English papers a few weeks ago, under the caption of "Russian cruelty."

"Five Russian deserters — who were apprehended close to, if not upon, the Russian territory — received fifteen hundred strokes of the knout; it is very seldom the victim survives the thousandth blow. Notwithstanding the death of the five in question, the executioner proceeded to inflict the very last lash prescribed by the sentence. With worse than Chinese refinement in barbarity, the parents and families of the condemned were forced to witness the punishment from beginning to end."

We really wish that those journalists who cater to the depraved appetite of the public for the horrible and disgusting, would fabricate lies, as masons mix mortar, with sufficient regard to consistency to make the parts stick together. We have no terms for the paragraphist who concocted this farrago of falsehood, foul taste, and absurdity; but to those who have ignorantly copied or believed him, there are a few words to be said.

A very moderate study of Russian law will teach them that no man, soldier or citizen, is punished with death in time of peace for aught but treason, or receives more than two hundred strokes of the knout for any crime, even murder. Russian soldiers

seldom desert, inasmuch as, however unwilling they may at first be to serve, they soon find that it is in every way better to be a soldier than a serf: when they do, they are disgraced by being anew enslaved. The colonel of a Russian regiment may order one of the file of his regiment, for very grave offences, twenty strokes of the knout, and no more. In civil life, murder is punished with two hundred lashes only, which, indeed, sometimes kill, but not often. Is it at all likely that a Russian court-martial would pronounce a harsher sentence than that of murder for desertion in time of peace, and which would render the second part of the punishment, disgrace, nugatory?

A Russian criminal receives the amount of his sentence at once, and, usually, the greater part of it in a state of insensibility. In those schools of honor and refinement, the British prize ring and army, a surgeon or a bottle-holder attends the sufferer, not to spare his physical suffering, but to make sure that he feels it all; to take him away from the ropes, or the triangles, in order to bring him back again, and tear open his lacerations as soon as nature can endure the agony. And yet the English accuse the Russians of cruelty! Two hundred strokes of the knout — it is too bad; yet we have seen a soldier in the American army take as many with the cats on two several successive mornings.

Any one who has seen much flogging knows that its severity depends much more on the arm that strikes than on the number of blows.

In the above statement, the probability is, if there is any truth in the story at all, that the deserters received 150 blows each, and that it troubled the reporter's conscience as little to add another cipher as it did his fingers. New beginners always faint

at about the fiftieth blow. As to the presence of the relatives — rubbish! — such silly barbarity would make the whole Russian people as restless as fleas, or Yankees.

It is alleged that the knout, and banishment to Siberia, are the meed of many political offences, not involving much moral guilt. True; the punishment of treason is proportioned to its possible or probable consequences, every where, not to the degree of its criminality. Is not poor, harmless Thomas Dorr in the state prison of Rhode Island at this moment?

Granting that Siberia were worse than imagination paints it, we ask if criminals are to expect a paradise at Botany Bay, or in the state prison at Charlestown? In its very worst aspect, it is not worse than any other penal settlement; and of what use is a penal settlement, how is it to deter offenders from crime, if it be made easy and agreeable to them? The fact is, that, as we have already written, and thousands have written before us, *omne ignotum pro magnifico est.* We are only afraid of ghosts because we know not what they are.

As for the cruelty of Russian punishments, it behooves us to be silent. In this free, civilized, enlightened country, the children of free, enlightened fathers have hanged and drowned witches and Quakers. Nay, it is little more than a century since a woman was burned alive in this very city of Boston. Men's heads were literally *sawed* off, for political offences, in Virginia, during Nat Turner's insurrection, which had a much better pretext than the rebellion of the Poles in 1830. Aquila Barnes was — not knouted after conviction in due course of law — but hung without any trial at all, in Arkansas, on suspicion of a murder, of which he

was afterwards proved innocent. Was not —— Brown sentenced to death, within the year, for aiding the escape of a slave? Is not Charles Torrey, now, in an American prison, on a charge of aiding slaves to escape? It is not many years since the enlightened citizens of Missouri roasted a man alive by a slow fire, because their virtuous horror of crime could not wait for the formality of a trial, or be satisfied with the measure of punishment awarded by the statute-book. We Americans have no cruelty wherewith to reproach Russia.

John Bull, too, may think, in the nineteenth century, of Glencoe, and the year 1746, and the death of Admiral Byng, and his slaughter of the unoffending Chinese, and his sworn tormentors, and his burnings, and drawings, and quarterings, and hold his tongue about Russian cruelty. What did he to the Maroons in Jamaica? What, to the scattered clans of Culloden? How did he treat the Croppies in 1798? Perhaps, too, he can remember Drogheda, Wexford, and Limerick. If he can, he may perhaps talk of the knout, Siberia, and the Poles, without a blush.

All nations have, at times, been cruel; but cruelty is less a part of the Russian character than of most others.

Kohl informs us, that Russians who have been in Siberia describe it as the El Dorado, the land of promise, of Russia. Nature, they say, is rich and wonderful there; the human race strong and healthy; society in the towns more polished and intellectual than any-where else in Russia. Whoever has got over his introduction, — that is to say, the knout and a few years' compulsory labor, — seldom wishes to leave the country again.

The knout is a leathern whip, not more terrible,

in reality, than the cat of the British army and navy, or the long *cow-hide* of the negro overseer. With the cowhide, or the knout, a man *may* be killed with three scientific strokes — it has been done with one.

A recent traveller, on his return from Moscow to St. Petersburg, called on M. Onvaroff, the minister for public education, and found him preparing a report to the emperor on the number of schools recently founded in each provincial government, showing that the eagerness of the people for instruction had rendered a great increase necessary in their number. "Civilized man," said the minister, stepping up to the visitor, with the tables in his hand, "can you guess in which of our provinces it is proved, by figures and facts, that the people are most desirous of acquiring education?" The visitor replied in the negative. "Then I will tell you," resumed M. Onvaroff. "It is Siberia. In that desolate region, the schools are found to be too few to receive all the children desirous of attending, and, therefore, we must establish additional schools in Siberia." *

* Polytechnic Journal, Feb. 1842

CHAPTER IX.

THE RUSSIAN NOBILITY. — MERCHANTS AND BURGHERS.

The boyarins, or hereditary nobles, of Russia, are, for the most part, proprietors of the soil; but their rank is not necessarily dependent on the retention of their fiefs. Any Russian plebeian may become noble by his public services: the son of a simple citizen may successively be clerk, assessor, court counsellor, college counsellor, counsellor of state, privy-counsellor, and minister; and every civil grade, above that of an assessor, involves the rank of noble. A counsellor of state is called, moreover, *excellency*, and *general;* for every civil grade is assimilated with a military title.

In both the army and the civil service, there are fourteen grades for the soldier, or civil functionary, to pass, before he becomes a noble, by winning his epaulet or his patent. Nay, unless he misbehaves, he *must* mount, for he is promoted every three years, at furthest. Not that a soldier must get into the nobility and his grave together, either; there is much quicker advancement for those who deserve it. Count Cheremeteff, now, or lately, an imperial counsellor, began life a peasant serf; was next a private soldier; and nobly raised himself from the ranks by his personal merit. His opinions on military affairs are now considered paramount authority, and he is the author of several valuable elementary works, intended for the people and the soldiery.

Notwithstanding the way to promotion is thus thrown open to all, there is a wide difference between the Russian plebeian and noble. Neither a nobleman nor an officer is liable to corporal punishments by the civil or military law; they are exempted from the knout and bastinado, which are reserved for the peasant and private soldier. Even in cases of treason, the noble suffers nothing more degrading than imprisonment, exile, or death; and capital punishment has become extremely rare.

Though the Russian nobility have no share in the government, they still constitute an immense power in the state. The land and money being exclusively in their hands, agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, can be little advanced but through their agency. They are soon acquainted with every improvement introduced into Europe, and quick to take advantage of whatever accords with their own interests. Some of the wealthy ones have established manufactories of beet-sugar, distilleries, glass, &c., on their estates, at vast expense, which have effected very desirable results. There is a great extent of information now diffused among the nobility, in striking contrast with the ignorance of the mass. Commerce, manufactures, statistics, science, literature, and the arts, are as much and as intelligently discussed at St. Petersburg, as in Paris or London.

The nobility were not enfranchised in Russia till the reign of Peter III. They were then licensed to go armed or not, as they pleased, and to travel abroad. They were, however, obliged, by etiquette, to appear at court, and ask leave, which Catherine, his successor, might refuse, if she chose; and so it continues to this day. In 1834, eighty individuals, or heads of

families, petitioned for leave to travel, and about half of them were refused.*

Ritchie thinks that, if the restriction was taken off, there would be fewer applications for leave of absence; inasmuch as few of the Russian nobles can afford to travel, though they may live very comfortably at home. "No man," he adds, "now thinks of wearing a sword, except when on military duty; but if a ukase were issued, prohibiting men from doing so without having asked and obtained permission, petitions would shower in from half the nobles in the empire."

A Russian nobleman is only seen in his true character in Russia: abroad, he adopts the tastes and habits of those with whom he comes in contact. The consequence is, that he is popular wherever he goes. This statement, of course, presumes a vast improvement since the time of Catherine. The representatives of the states assembled by her in 1796, though, doubtless, the first men of all parts of the empire, immediately sold the commemorative medals struck and given to them by the empress, on the occasion, to the goldsmiths.†

Catherine's rules will serve to show the manners of the court nobility assembled in the palace of Czarskoselo, at that period, for the very purpose of being polished. The lady who there rose, or seated herself, on the empress's entrance or departure from a room, was fined a silver ruble.

"RULES

"*By which all who enter these doors must conduct themselves.*

"1. To leave every kind of rank at the door; likewise hats, and swords, above all.

* Ritchie. † Tooke.

"2. Disputes about prerogative, pride, and such like, should any exist, to be left at the door.

"3. To be lively; but not to spoil, or to break, or to bite any thing.

"4. To sit, to stand, to walk about, as each thinks proper, without regard to others.

"5. To speak with moderation, and not too loud; that the ears and heads of the rest may not ache.

"6. To dispute without warmth or passion.

"7. Not to sigh, or to groan, and so entail tedium and heaviness on the rest.

"8. Any innocent game that one may project not to be found fault with by the others.

"9. To eat of the sweet and the savory; but to drink with moderation; that each may always find his feet, on going out of the door.

"10. All wrangling to end in the room; and what goes in at one ear should go out at the other, before the party goes out of the door.

"Should any one offend against the aforesaid, on testimony of two witnesses, for every fault, the offender must drink a glass of cold water, not excepting the ladies, and read aloud a page of the Telemachid.

"And whoever offends against three clauses in one evening shall learn six lines of the Telemachid by heart.

"And if any one offend against the ten, he must be no more admitted."*

Such has been the improvement since Catherine's time, that Russian travellers, now, are as satirical upon foreign courts as foreign travellers once were upon their own.†

* Tooke. † Khol.

Among the Russian nobility are now mixed a great number of German birth or extraction; for to be a foreigner is, in itself, a sort of title in Russia. It appears, from the St. Petersburg Court Calendar for 1837, that 600 of the highest posts in the empire, from ministers and field-marshals downward, were filled with persons of German names; or with Germans, to Russians, in the ratio of one to four and a half. Reckoning the whole population of the empire at sixty-two millions, it follows that its German population (of 400,000) fill as many of the highest offices as 14,000,000 of the non-German population. Ten Germans had seats in the senate that year, and 40 out of 300 ladies and maids of honor had German names.*

One day that the Emperor Nicholas was presiding in his council of ministers, several questions were discussed relative to the best mode of promoting national improvement. The discussion necessarily called forth many ideas and opinions current in other parts of Europe. After all had spoken, the czar thus delivered himself: "I cannot refrain from avowing my astonishment at what I have heard in the course of this discussion. The council being composed of men of various ages, I was led to expect that the younger ministers would urge me forward to reform, while I should hear only retrograde sentiments from those advanced in life; but the contrary is the fact. My old ministers are the advocates of improvement, and liberal ideas are combated by the younger ones. This circumstance appears to me very singular, and demands my earnest attention. I must reflect upon it."

This led the emperor to other reflections. He

* Khol.

saw around him two classes of men — the first, the elegant remains of the old Russian court, who had flourished under Catherine, Paul, and Alexander. They knew the world well, and had mingled much with the French society of the last century. They considered national improvement the gradual and inevitable application of the principles of the school of Voltaire to social laws and customs. They did not wish to take from the people their ignorance, or their religion, which, they alleged, was a useful instrument of government. For the upper classes they recommended the adoption of the old French *régime* of skeptical philosophy and elegant civilization.

The other, younger, class of politicians saw their great country copying, and imitating, and adopting, the arts, the literature, and even the language, of France, with regret. "As long," said they, "as the entire merit of a nation consists in imitating another, what is to be expected from it? It is not imitative improvement that ought to be encouraged, but the genuine national development, that is too often retarded by foreign imitation. Let us obtain all the light we can from the French; but let us not cease to be Russians. Let us try to implant manners, laws, and arts, in our own country; to foster national genius; and thus we shall acquire a more solid and lasting improvement than can be gained from a flimsy and superficial civilization, whose tendency is to turn men who were barbarians but the other day into Parisians." This language did not displease the emperor, and he acted upon it.*

He has not, apparently, succeeded very well in

* Polytechnic Journal, Feb. 1842.

developing the germs of nationality. As our most primitive aborigines most delight in laced coats; as the Taheitan ladies delight in arraying themselves in sailors' trousers; so the Russian aristocracy persist in running after foreign fashions. Very little that can be called Russian has been produced by Russian painters or musicians. Russian literature promises better: it already boasts of the historian Karamsin, the fabulist Krailow, and the poet Pushlin. A host more might be mentioned. If Russia has not yet produced a Shakspeare or a Newton, it should be remembered that she is but half a century old.

Among other things, the Emperor Nicholas regretted to see that the French had become so much the court language of the empire, that many ladies of Moscow had actually forgotten Russian. One of the grand dukes having been invited to a ball given by the Muscovite nobility, the emperor specially enjoined him to dance only with such ladies as spoke French, and who would be pointed out to him; at the same time forbidding him to utter a syllable of any language but Russian during the whole entertainment. There can be no doubt that the ladies entertained the highest possible sense of the honor of dancing with the prince, and the reader may imagine their disappointment and mortification at finding themselves unable to hold any communication with him.*

Peter the Great divided the whole Russian population into fourteen classes, the eight highest of which, alone, were to confer hereditary nobility. Some of the other classes conferred personal nobility, for life, and others distinguished those en-

* Polytechnic Journal.

rolled in them as *well born*, or gentlemen. This arrangement subsists, with little alteration, now.

This creation of a new order of nobility, founded on service or merit, was, no doubt, a material improvement. It has lessened the influence of the old nobles, and, in some degree, liberalized the caste, while it has offered an object of ambition to all classes. One writer * laments that the multiplication of titles has lessened their value. We think that the less hereditary titles of nobility are valued, the better.

We do not doubt that this is the view the emperor himself takes of the matter. To make hereditary nobility contemptible by its commonness, seems to have been the express object of two new statutes inserted in the *svod*. — "Every crown peasant, (say, in round numbers, twenty-two millions,) when he acquires sufficient wealth, may purchase the rights of citizenship, and become the free merchant, or burgher, of a town."

"Every merchant of the first guild who has been thrice elected chief of the corporation of his district, *at once establishes* for his family the privilege of hereditary nobility."

These statutes were exceedingly unpalatable to ministers and counsellors; but they were obliged to swallow them. To wash them down, however, the emperor appended another, viz., "The rate of interest is reduced from six to four per cent."

The Russians are, nevertheless, fond of titles, like all rude people; — that of prince, in particular. By the time he is a grandfather, a prince sees a flourishing colony of young princes about him. Beggars they may be, too. The objection is al-

* Schnitzler, *Statistique générale*.

ready realized. Hereditary nobility is as little regarded in Russia as it ought to be every where else. Even wealth gives a family no permanent consequence. Every man is valued according to his usefulness, and the best evidence of this is the rank conferred by the emperor. He may, and must, sometimes, make bad selections; but the plan works wonderfully well as a whole.

In 1836, the nobles were 691,355; of whom 538,160 were hereditary, and the rest personal dignitaries. Of these hereditary drones, the kingdom of Poland contributed 283,420; not that the half of them had estates; indeed, very many of them were what are vulgarly called gentlemen with three outs; *Anglice*, beggars, or worse. In Courland, Livonia, and the Polish provinces, none but nobles can inherit landed property; but, in Russia proper, such is not the case — though even there, with the exception of the crown estates, they are almost the only landed proprietors.

The titles of prince, count, baron, &c., have superseded those formerly in use, though they convey no additional power or privileges. There are more than a hundred titular princes in the government of Tala alone. All the members of a noble family are noble, and have the same title as its head. On the death of a noble, his estate is divided, by a fixed scale, among his children, of both sexes. One seventh of his landed property goes to his widow, forever, one fourteenth to each of his daughters, and the residue is equally divided among his sons.*

Nobles are exempted from all personal charges, and from military service; but are required to furnish recruits from the army according to the

* Venables's Russia

number of their serfs. Precedence is determined by military grade: an ensign may take it of any nobleman without military rank.

So few travellers and writers on Russia make any mention of the nobles, — unless in situations where they can be seen by all the world, — as, for example, in the streets, in their travelling carriages, or on public occasions, that the inference is unavoidable that they have seldom been admitted, on terms of equality, to their society. Hence we know little of their manners and character as a class. It is certain, however, that there are many accomplished gentlemen among them. It is more than probable that the accounts given of them by such tourists as Clarke, Lyal (lie-all?) and the reverend spatterer Morton, are about as true as the gross, vulgar, and malignant caricatures of Dickens and Mrs. Trollope. As far as mere manners go, the noble is usually in advance of his race every where.

The Russian nobility are admitted by all to be universally hospitable, and are stigmatized, we fear with some degree of justice, as coarse and sensual. Considering that they have no public occupation, and that, in most parts of the empire, they can have little society but that of their slaves, it is not wonderful if their tastes and habits do still savor somewhat of barbarism; but very much so, that they should have made what improvement they have.

The Russian nobles keep great numbers of vassals in their houses as servants. Some houses have upwards of five hundred of these retainers, who receive but a paltry pittance as wages; yet it suffices for their wants, as their masters feed and clothe them. They are called *dwarnije ljudi*, (court-yard people,) and are exempted from agricultural labor and military service. They find their own bread and

kwas, (an acid beverage, in universal use,) and pick up the crumbs from their lords' table, wear the same clothes they wore on the natal dunghill, and sleep on the kitchen chairs, or beside the kitchen stove. They are provided with boots, and a caftan, while they are employed in the household, and are soon sent back to the fields. They differ too little from other peasants to form a distinct class of society.*

Several Russian noblemen, of late, have distinguished themselves by their attention to their estates. In some instances, they have imported stewards and laborers from England. We have already spoken of their enterprise as manufacturers. When a noble establishes a manufactory on a large scale, and keeps it in constant operation, he commonly finds it necessary to put the serfs on the footing of hired laborers, to pay them what he thinks fit for their work, and leave them to provide for their own subsistence, which he would otherwise be obliged to do himself.

Coxe and Pinkerton, who are among the most candid and best writers on Russia, speak very favorably of the Russian nobility.

The merchants, burghers, &c., of whom it has been the settled policy of the czars, since the great Peter, to form a free, middle, intermediate class, between the nobles and the serfs, are thus described by the Empress Catherine, in her instructions for a new code of laws: "This class, composed of freemen, belong neither to the class of nobles, nor to that of peasants. All those who, being neither gentlemen nor peasants, follow the arts and sciences, navigation, commerce, or exercise trade,

* Khol.

are to be ranked in this class. In it should be placed all those who, born of plebeian parents, shall have been brought up in schools or places of education, religious or otherwise, founded by us, or our successors. Also the children of officers and of secretaries to the chancery."

Merchants and traders belong to this class, and are distributed in guilds, according to the amount of their capital. They also enjoy certain privileges, on paying a fixed per centage on their capital.

Every Russian trader must be a burgher, and be registered as such, to enjoy the freedom of trade. All whose names are registered in the burghers' book, are either townsmen, with property within the city, or members of a guild.

The guilds are three.

Members of the first guild report themselves worth from ten to fifty thousand rubles. They may engage in foreign commerce, and are not liable to corporal punishment. They may drive a carriage, with two horses.

Members of the second guild declare themselves possessed of from five to ten thousand rubles, and are restricted to inland trade.

From a thousand to five thousand rubles entitle a trader to admission into the third guild, which comprises all stationary petty dealers.

All pay 1 3-4 per cent. on the capital they acknowledge, the amount of which is left to the individual's conscience.

The burghers have many privileges more than the peasants; and they are distinguished from the merchants in being liable to the capitation tax, and to military and naval service. The German and other free colonists, established in different parts

of the empire, and the free cultivators, belong to this intermediate class, which may contain three millions of individuals.

This class, though so lately called into existence, is rapidly on the increase, and actively engaged in industrious enterprise. Here it is that the emperor most feels the importance of the nobility. He may confer freedom, and rank, and privileges, on commerce and mechanical skill; but it is from the nobles that the wealth must come to set them in motion; and it is fortunate for Russia, that the boyarin cannot reap the advantages of the arts without conceding a share of them to the artist. However small that share, it cannot fail to insure competence and perfect freedom to the working classes, in the course of time.

The Empress Catherine was wide awake to the importance of such a class. Finding that the illegitimate children produced in Russia were equal to one fifth of the whole number of births, she claimed all natural children, whose parents were willing to surrender them, as the property of the state. She decreed that these children, after being carefully educated, and trained to useful callings, should become free citizens; and thus the foundation of the class was laid. In furtherance of this plan, grants of money were made by the crown, with which, augmented by the donations of individuals, hospitals and schools were speedily established. Thirty thousand children are constantly maintained, and taught trades, in the Foundling Hospital at Moscow, and the schools connected with it.

The Emperor Nicholas has shown exceeding sagacity in carrying out the policy so nobly fixed by his predecessors. He saw, as clearly as they did, that

the emancipation of his crown from feudal influences would never be complete till the imperial authority, using the popular interest as a fulcrum, shall downheave the remaining power of his still important aristocracy. But the measures requisite to obtain this object demand the concurrence of the imperial council, his ministers, the senate, &c.; and as these bodies are composed of nobles, they are naturally interested in opposing and retarding any diminution of the privileges of their order. Nicholas, however, has turned the enemy's flank. He is himself the most extensive landholder in his dominions, and nothing is easier for him than to add new estates (peopled with peasants, who thus become his property) to his vast possessions. He may, as he has done, establish manufactories on his own domains, and grant freedom to intelligent and industrious workmen, as he does. He purchases a great many ignorant peasants yearly, and sends them to his own manufactories, where they are instructed in various branches of industry. Every year an equal number of crown peasants, who have proved themselves capable of gaining their own living, are affranchised, and added to the middle class. The perseverance with which he carries out the views of Catherine claims our warmest admiration.

The encouragement now held out to every branch of art and industry, in Russia, has developed the wonderful imitative powers of the Russian people. Some authors, prematurely, we think, say that it has also shown the Russian poverty of invention. It should be recollected how short a time *civilized* Russia has existed; and that, in that short period, there have been too many things to imitate, to leave much time for invention. The

want of an enlightened sovereign, willing to encourage the arts, explains the late civilization of Russia, while her present wonderful advancement attests the sovereign genius of the Emperor Nicholas.

The foreign traveller in a Russian city scarcely observes the presence of the embryo middle class. The fact is easily explained. The peasants of Russia are forty-four millions, at least, and such a body must necessarily move slow. Moreover, putting their great number out of the question, they cannot, with much fewer advantages, have improved nearly so fast as the wealthy, comparatively small body of nobles. Now, admitting the affranchisement of a number of serfs equal to the whole class of nobles, (and it is much greater,) they would still be too few to make much show, mingled with the entire mass. The distinction between the highest and lowest classes is, therefore, apparently as great as ever.

The highest class of merchants have entirely laid aside their national peculiarities, and are very little distinguished from the nobles, if at all. The lower class, the true Russians, still rejoice in the beard and caftan. They often ostentatiously purchase a nobleman's house, for a show; they occupy only the shabbiest part of it. They are often seen, in a uniform bedizened with gold lace, stalking statelily in the streets.

Peter the Great was a far-sighted politician: he offered pride a premium.

Speaking of petty merchants, we must remark, that many of them are still serfs, subject to the *obrok*, or capitation tax, paid by the peasant to his lord. The serf-merchant usually buys his freedom of his master, as soon as he has accumulated money

enough; but, if the master be not willing to sell, he cannot be compelled.

Ritchie sets the whole class of Russian petty traders down as liars, cheats, and swindlers, without a solitary exception. Just so our southern brethren speak of us; probably with about equal justice. We cannot contradict Ritchie, from any personal knowledge of our own; but perhaps we may be allowed to remark, that such wholesale condemnation is seldom merited by any large class of men.

CHAPTER X.

SLAVERY IN RUSSIA. — SLAVES — REALLY SUCH. — SERFS. — LICENSED SERFS. — POLICY OF NICHOLAS.

"UNHAPPILY," says M'Culloch's Gazetteer, (very good authority in most matters,) "the far largest portion of the people of Russia are *slaves*, belonging either to the crown or to individuals." Such, too, is the light in which most writers regard the Russian peasantry. The words *serf*, *peasant*, and *slave*, are commonly used as equivalent terms, and as such we have heretofore used them; but there is a distinction, and a wide one. The great mass of the Russian people are, indeed, slaves; but if any one supposes that Russian slavery, in its most hideous form, is comparable to American slavery south of Mason and Dixon's line, he does Russia cruel injustice.

The actual number of *slaves*, held in Russia as personal estate, and not attached to the soil, men who have neither souls nor bodies of their own, who are either attached friends or assassins, as they are treated, is, compared with the mass, very small; not much exceeding that of the nobles.* But these bondsmen cannot be sold or bought, according to a law promulgated fifty years ago, or murdered or mutilated with impunity.

It may be urged that the law is often a dead letter in Russia, as it is in slave-holding America.

* Ritchie.

Still the legal admission that the Russian slave has a property in his own life and limbs, and that he is not an alienable chattel, like an ox or an ass, — in short, that he is a human being, endowed with some rights, — is a great improvement on some of the American state codes.

The spectacle was never seen, in Russia, of a man, his wife, and his child, sold in the same hour, on the same auction-stand, to three different purchasers, and hurried away, first to prison, and then to three different and widely-separated provinces.

No reward is ever offered in Russia for a runaway slave's head.

No slave is prohibited by law, in Russia, from learning to read, and no freeman can be punished for teaching him.

Every Russian slave may worship God, how, when, and in what church, he pleases.

Slaves are sometimes cruelly flogged in Russia; but they never wear iron yokes upon their necks, or are identified by loss of teeth, brands, burns, or mutilations, inflicted as punishments.

The veriest slave in Russia, once enfranchised by his master, may aspire to any rank, but the highest, in the empire.

Almost all of this unhappy race are, of course, included among the "court-yard people." We do not remember that any writer on Russia, excepting Leitch Ritchie, has ever even mentioned the existence of such a class.

How these wretches became slaves, we have no means of ascertaining; it is enough for us that slaves they are. Their proportion to the other classes is much less than that of our slaves is to us; but the effects of the curse are the same in Russia that they were in the British West Indies, are

in the United States, and must and will be wherever God, in his anger, suffers slavery to exist. In 183–, a slave in Moscow slew his mistress, a lady of a kind and humane disposition. His motive could never be discovered. He confessed that he had smothered her in her bed, but would not confess whether his object was revenge or robbery. Yet this hardened wretch, after undergoing the knout and being chained for his tramp to Siberia, was anxious to establish the innocence of two women, his fellow-servants and sufferers, who had been condemned and knouted as accomplices, though he declared that they had not even known his intentions.

Not a particle of evidence was adduced against these women. They were condemned, on the legal presumption, that, having been in the house at the time of the murder, they must have had knowledge of the deed. Had the like crime been committed, with like circumstances, in the state of Missouri, they would probably have been hanged, or, what is more likely, roasted alive, on the illegal presumption of wearing black skins. The Russian atrocity seems to have been borrowed from Roman jurisprudence.

The truth is, the system of slavery, exist where it may, is a crime so monstrous, that it can only be sustained by a thousand other crimes, let their consequences be never so destructive to humanity. It is an institution that cannot subsist without provoking assassinations, to be punished by legal murders, or, as in the above case, by a legal scourging, branding, and banishment, of the helpless innocent. But the slaves of Russia are worth a thousand rubles a-piece, as property; and, moreover, their emancipation by the absolute will of the emperor

would involve the emancipation of the serfs also: in a word, it would be the sudden and violent rupture of all the ties that bind Russian society together. Is this to be expected? — is it to be desired? — can it be — ought it to be done? These are questions that have cost England long years to answer; questions that we never shall answer; questions that, we think, never will be answered for us, but in one of two ways, viz. by a universal amalgamation of colors in the south, or by blood and burning. The former is not a very agreeable prospect to our southern brethren and sisters, the latter especially; but no such consequences can result in Russia. No Russian lady need fear transmitting her name to a mulatto posterity, should slavery continue in Russia to the end of time.

We shall presently show that, whether universal emancipation in Russia be expedient and desirable, or not, it will and must take place; and has, for half a century, been in a train of rapid accomplishment. Nay, it will appear that, if the life of Nicholas I. be prolonged to the threescore years and ten allotted to man, and if his successor shall "follow in the footsteps of his illustrious predecessor," the extinction of slavery will assuredly have been consummated, in Russia, in less time than it has cost England. It is lucky that things are not in Russia as they are in America; that the emperor is not bound by any state precedents; that he can afford to look down with disdain upon our example.

The serfs, confounded with the slaves of Russia by almost all writers, belong to the soil, and are the great bulk of the nation. They belong to the crown, and to the hereditary proprietors, — twenty-two millions to the former, and twenty-three to the latter. Count Cheremeteff, once a serf himself

is the owner of a hundred and ten thousand of them, and there are some other nobles who have almost as many. The time and liberty of those belonging to private individuals is absolutely at the disposal of their masters. They are born on the soil, and with it their legal rights begin and end. Any privilege they may enjoy, away from the natal spot — the very license to leave it — is only by favor of their masters; their earnings, too, are theirs; at least, there is no law to protect them in the usufruct thereof, any more than there is to protect an American slave. Of course, it may be assumed of the serfs, as of the slaves, where the practice of the system corresponds with the theory, as a general rule, that their reasoning powers are chiefly applied to escape as much as possible of the labor from which they are to derive no benefit, and in which they have no personal interest.

But the theory and the practice do not correspond. It is, generally, the interest of the serf-holder to accept of the serf a stated annual sum instead of the personal services he might otherwise exact. This capitation tax is called their *obrok;* and, after paying it, the serf is free from other demands for the time. This obrok, tax, tribute, or rent, may be stated at from thirty-five to forty-five rubles a male head, on the average. Others, instead of paying an obrok, perform task-work; others yield a tithe of the produce they raise; and all of these impositions are demanded from some of them. Runaway serfs are punished with imprisonment and hard labor; but the law protects their lives.

If we presuppose that the serfs have no ambition, and consider their obrok what, in fact, it usually is, a very trifling rent for the lands they occupy, — they are, apparently, as well off as the English

peasantry. They can be transferred from one master to another with the land; but they cannot be removed from it without their own consent; therefore, they can no more be said to be sold than an English, or American tenant, when the title-deeds of his farm change owners. Supposing the serf's obrok to be a purely arbitrary exaction, for which no equivalent is rendered, — as it is when he buys permission to leave the estate and try his fortune elsewhere, — the injustice is not greater than is endured by English dissenters and Irish peasantry, who patiently pay, the slaves! an obrok, without an equivalent, to the established church. Moreover, the Russian land-holder does not add insult to extortion; he does not rob his serf in the name of his maker. But the worst of it, and what in a great measure paralyzes the serf's energies, is, that the obrok is not a fixed sum, like rent, but depends on the liberality, avarice, or caprice, of the master, who proportions it to his bondman's ability to pay. Some of the serfs licensed to dwell away from their estates, in towns, are amerced upwards of a thousand rubles. This is something akin, in principle, to the Abyssinian practice of eating flesh with the blood.

Moreover, a Russian proprietor may inflict corporal punishment on his slave. The serf cannot pay for his liberty as a right: his lord may refuse to part with him, or fix the price beyond the possibility of attainment. The fact is, in short, that in Russia, as in every country where the laws are feeble, — the slave-holding states, for example, — the condition of the serf depends upon the character of the seigneur. Where one class has great power over another, there will be abuse; and, what is more pernicious to the moral and mental character of the governed, insecurity. At the worst, there is not so

much oppression in Russia as formerly, and the condition of the serfs is not so bad, generally, as might, *a priori*, be supposed. No serf ever starves in Russia; he has a greater command of the necessaries of life than the Irish serf. The villages are often as snug and comfortable as English, almost as much so as Yankee ones; a Scotch writer admits that they are on a par with Caledonian villages, except in the article of dirt, which is far less abundant and less ostentatious in Russia than in the land of cakes. A south-western negro quarter, or an Irish hovel, would be considered derogatory to the breeding of a Russian swine.

Something may justly be said, too, in justification of the present race of serf-holders. The number of brutal, ignorant tyrants, always to be found in a slave-holding aristocracy, is rapidly diminishing in Russia under the knives and hatchets of their victims, the influence of civilization and improved laws, and the example of the emperor. The master may chastise the servant; but if the latter die of the correction, he is hanged for the murder. The serfs on the estates of humane and enlightened masters are well supplied with all the comforts of life. We do not know, from any positive authority, that the property acquired by licensed serfs is any better protected by law now than it was before the reign of Nicholas; yet such must be the fact. Else, should we hear of one licensed serf having four thousand laborers at once in his pay in St. Petersburg, and of another's planning and building the Kazan cathedral church, the finest in that splendid city? Should we be told of serfs rolling in their carriages, and living as magnificently as the magnates of the land, were it in the power of their masters to despoil them? There were no such slaves

in the West Indies; there are none such in the United States.

It is to be taken into account, however, that the proprietors pay a tax on their peasants to the treasury, at the rate of about four rubles per male head; and that they are required to furnish recruits for the army, according to the number of their tenantry. Moreover, they are under legal obligation to provide their serfs, old and young, sick or well, with the necessaries of life, and, if one of them is found begging, his master is fined.

The Russian landed proprietors are at least as well educated and intelligent a class as the French or English ones. They are, therefore, generally aware that their own interests and respectability depend upon the condition of their peasants. The abuse of their power is not therefore general, or even common. To increase the value of their property, their fathers used to compel their serfs to marry as soon as they attained puberty, as is practised in Virginia without any ceremony. Peter forbade compulsion in the case; and Alexander, in 1801, fixed the marriageable ages of both sexes at eighteen and sixteen. At present, the proprietors trouble themselves little about the matter.

Ritchie found the serfs of Prince S. Gargarin, "one of the most humane and intelligent" aristocrats in Russia, at Yassenova, "as happy and comfortable as any peasantry in the world, with large gardens well stocked with fruit-trees, and their public bath — an unfailing sign of Russia — clean and in good order.

"The very reverse of this description, however, applied to a village close by, of which the proprietor was a lady. This is the dreadful evil of the system: the happiness, or misery, of a great portion

of the people of Russia depends upon the moral character of a comparatively small number of individuals."

In another place, the same author thus describes a scene in Russian rural life: "I was particularly struck with the neat, and even genteel, appearance of one of the houses; and, with the aid of an interpreter, made some inquiries which threw a good deal of light upon the manners of the peasantry. To build the house, we were told, cost a thousand rubles; which was, in all probability, not half the real sum. Even the lady-mujik who did the honors smiled significantly as she gave us this piece of information; half in doubt, as it seemed, whether it would be more unpleasant to let us undervalue her acquisition, or to run the risk of the story of her wealth getting to the landlord's ears. Yet her landlord was *Prince S. Gargarin.* The explanation is, that the obrok is fixed by the master, and may consequently be supposed to correspond with the means of the serf.

"The building occupied a large space of ground, but the greater part consisted of what, in an English farm, would be outhouses. In a climate like this, every thing must be under one roof. The dwelling-house was composed of three small apartments, instead of merely the usual "butt and ben;" and here resided three respectable and well-doing families — that of the father, and those of his two sons. In Russia, when a peasant marries, he brings his wife home; and, though the common nest does not become larger, the old birds make a little room for the stranger, while the grandchildren, being born on the spot, make room for themselves. The atmosphere of the house was incomparably hotter than that of the street, which was *baking* in the

sun; and every door, window, or chink, was kept carefully shut. It is to this artificial atmosphere, and to this alone, that the premature decay of beauty is owing. The vapor bath, I feel convinced, is rather favorable to it than otherwise.

"The garden, or rather orchard, was large, and well stocked with the usual kind of fruit-trees. Almost all these, however, were planted from the seeds; and I observed some apple-trees, which, although five years' old, were not more than six feet high. Our conductress pointed out a few slips which had been lately set in the ground, but she appeared to be in some doubt as to their thriving, saying that they did not understand that mode of planting. This woman had the most beautiful teeth I ever saw; and having hitherto been accustomed only to the beauties of the city and of the great roads, I asked her, in surprise, to what this was owing. She replied that *she never painted her face;* and that, after being in Moscow for two years as a nurse, *finding the use of tea discolored her teeth*, she had returned instantly to her village in order to preserve those ornaments, which had been envied by women of the highest distinction. The manners of this peasant were easy and graceful, I was going to say, lady-like; and, when bidding us adieu, she observed, with an inclination which would have done honor to a duchess, that 'if we would repeat our visit in a week or two, when the fruit was ripe, it would give her still more pleasure.' This was very well for a female barbarian."

True. Had Mr. Ritchie visited a Yankee farm-house, he would have been required to give an account of himself; whence he came, whither he was going, and what his business was, together with the particular details of his birth, parentage,

education, and legal settlement. At an English cottage, he would probably have been dismissed with a request for "summat to drink his honor's health." Nevertheless, the poor mujik did as well as she knew how, and acquitted herself handsomely, considering — that her guest was a British traveller.

The value of a Russian estate formerly depended more on the number of its serfs than on the extent or quality of the soil; but, owing to the compulsory division of estates on the death of proprietors, and the increase of population, such is not now the case. The proprietor is sometimes burdened with the support of more peasants than he can employ, and has to pay the government tax on them beside. This will account for the general willingness of the nobles to sell the slaves their freedom, and to accept the obrok. In almost all of Great Russia, the proprietors have nothing to do with their tenants but to receive their rent, (obrok.) In the Baltic provinces the landlords keep some part of their estates in their own hands, which is cultivated by the task-work of the peasants on the other portions, who are allowed houses and grounds for their service.

It may seem that, provided the obrok were moderate, whether paid in money or work, and the landlord allowed the tenant to reap the benefit of his increased industry or economy, there would be little objection to this system; but its uncertainty spoils all. If the peasant thrives and improves his land, the chance is that his obrok will be raised, or a part of his farm taken away. Even the crown peasants suffer from the extortion of those to whom their lands are let, though the amount of their task-work is fixed by law. Hence labor is avoided, and

there is little improvement on any lands not managed by the actual proprietors, or by free tenants.

When the population of an estate parcelled among serfs increases, a new distribution must necessarily be made; and if there is no unoccupied land, room must be made for the new-comers on the grounds already occupied. Then the old occupants, if dissatisfied, are licensed to go where they please, still paying their obrok half-yearly.

The Russian peasant is satisfied with his diet, if he have cabbage soup, with pork boiled in it, and rye bread, which is the staple food of the empire. On holidays, he indulges in butcher's meat; and at other times, he eats eggs, salt fish, pork, bacon, onions, and mushrooms, which are very abundant in their season. His favorite dish is a salmagundi made of oats and rye flour, fresh or salt meat, redolent of garlic and onions. Salted cucumbers are never absent from his table; and these, and salted cabbage, are important items of internal commerce. He is compelled to this fodder by the extraordinary number of fasts and fast days; indeed, there are but about sixty days in the year on which he dares to look at meat. He is very fond of meat; but fonder still of brandy. The consumption thereof is eighty millions of gallons a year, and produces a large annual revenue for the government—probably not less than one third.

Notwithstanding this, the Emperor Nicholas has, at his own expense, published the Rev. Dr. Baird's History of Temperance, besides printing various tracts, which he has distributed throughout his empire. In fine, he gave Dr. Baird every possible encouragement. We wonder if any other European sovereign would have done as much.

The Russian peasantry are of middle stature,

healthy, stout, and firmly built. They live together in log villages, with the gables of the houses to the road. Sometimes the houses are of two stories. They are not uncomfortable, as every American knows. Beds are by no means considered necessaries of life by the Russian peasants.

About one or two out of five hundred males ordinarily go to swell the army and navy; but, in war, two or three males out of five hundred are taken. In one or two instances, one of a hundred has been drafted; but this was the maximum. The seigneurs select the recruits, and, of course, rid themselves of the most troublesome members of the community; only they must be between eighteen and forty years of age, healthy and able-bodied.

The conscript becomes a free man, if a soldier can be so called. If he desert, he is enslaved again; but this rarely happens. His children are educated at public or regimental schools, and, if they deserve it, become officers. Twelve years of faithful service in the ranks entitle the private soldier to a commission. There are no capital punishments in the Russian army in time of peace. Corporal punishments, not exceeding twenty strokes of the knout, may be inflicted by officers in command of regiments, but only for very grave offences. At the expiration of their term of service, Russian soldiers receive a small pension. The wounded are maintained in hospitals.

A soldier who remains in the service after his term has expired, receives double pay, and is exempted from corporal punishment. If he serve voluntarily five years, he retires on a pension equal to three times his original pay.

We believe we have sketched, in a few bold

strokes, the condition of the slaves or serfs of Russia, in all its political phases Catherine desired to abolish it, and did something. "Servants ought not to be treated too harshly," said she in her *Instructions;* "for harshness begets resistance." Alexander was the enlightened friend of the slave, and did something more. From the well-known disposition, and the superior energy and intelligence of Nicholas — from what he has already done, we may expect a great deal more. Still, it is undeniable that he has great difficulties to contend with. We prate of the danger and difficulty of immediately emancipating less than three millions; what, then, must it be where there are between forty and fifty?

Nicholas has placed the crown serfs — nearly half of the entire Russian peasantry — almost in the condition of rent-paying English peasants,* living in small communes of their own, and governed by individuals of their own body. Still, they are the property of the crown; but the practice is here again, as with the tenants of individuals, better than the theory. To all intents and purposes, the crown peasants of Russia are, for the time being, as free, as comfortable, and as happy, as any peasantry in Europe.†

The peasants licensed by their lords to reside in towns learn something of freedom, look with a shudder on the indignities to which their village companions are exposed, and hasten to buy their freedom, that they may themselves be exempted from the like. This, if the pride or caprice of their masters does not prevent them, they soon effect, and then the career of ambition is open to them.

* London Quarterly, March, 1841. † Ibid.

The Emperor Nicholas has taken this class under his especial protection. He has ennobled it, by making it an object of general ambition to be enrolled in it, and he is looked upon by the mujiks as something more than a friend — as a protecting angel. They sometimes assassinate their masters; but they are, one and all, at all times ready to lay down their lives for their emperor. We must turn to the pages of fiction to form an idea of the devotion of these poor creatures.

It is frequently alleged, in regard to the slaves in the United States, that the great body of them would not accept freedom were it offered to them. This we believe to be true of no body of slaves on earth — least of all, of ours; but it is unquestionable that a very great many of the Russian serfs are of that way of thinking. If a noble breaks the bonds of a serf, he, of course, resumes his land, which, were justice law, belongs to the serf, for he received it from his ancestors, and on it he and his children were born. To become a tenant, liable to be turned off in a moment, to abandon all his privileges, (secured to him by time and habit,) is a new and startling idea to him. He would stare to be told that he had no property in the value he and his sires had created. If he has any idea of liberty at all, it is that he may enjoy the land without paying rent.

This is not a mere speculative supposition. It is usual in Russia, when a change of proprietors takes place, for the serfs to beg their liberty of their new lord; and sometimes they obtain it. In the year 1836, Mademoiselle D——, one of the most intelligent women in the empire, bought an estate with five hundred serfs, some of whom asked, and immediately obtained, their liberty; and it was proclaimed throughout the estate, that all who should demand

the same boon should receive it unconditionally. After this, not an application was made.*

Another small village, of forty or fifty males, came into the possession of M. Z——, of Moscow, who called all his serfs about him, and proffered them their freedom, with the privilege of remaining on the land, as tenants. They all refused.†

We do not mean to have it inferred that the serfs who would refuse freedom are the bulk of the Russian peasantry; far from it. They are the exception, not the rule. The number of licensed mujiks in the cities gives the lie to any such supposition. Even in this country, slaves have been known to remain in voluntary bondage. But we do mean that the class is larger in Russia than in any other slave-holding country in the world; so great, indeed, that, should the emperor attempt immediate emancipation, he would probably meet with as much difficulty on the part of the slaves as of the lords. Hence the inference is plain, that the serfs are not heinously abused, generally, and that the lords do not usually transcend the powers the law recognizes in them.

The serfs of Poland, in its best days, were far more wretched than the Russian peasantry. When the virtuous and truly patriotic Chancellor Zamoyski emancipated his slaves, in 1780, as we have already stated in the fourth chapter, he expressed a fear that they would give themselves up to idleness and licentiousness. The answer returned by the ancients of the commune contained a volume of philosophy. "When we had no property but the sticks in our hands," said they, "we had no encouragement to be orderly and industrious; and we always

* Ritchie. † Ibid.

acted inconsiderately, because we had nothing to lose by it. But now that these lands, and these houses, and these cattle, are our own, the fear of losing them will be a sufficient restraint upon us."

The success of the chancellor's experiment justified his foresight, as well on his own estates as on those of the younger Poniatowski, who followed his example.*

There is some doubt in our mind whether we have a right to call the Russian people barbarians or not. We call the Turks infidels. Nevertheless, a man may blaspheme the name of Christ with impunity in the streets of London, Paris, or New York; but, if he should do so in Constantinople, or Cairo, it would cost him his head. We call the Chinese, a more industrious and a more peaceful people than any in Europe or America, barbarians, precisely because they are deficient in the most barbarous of all knowledge — the art of shedding blood; for, in the essentials of civilization, which we take to be good laws, strictly executed, they are far before France or England; and, in the useful arts of peace, they are far before Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece, and Sardinia. We should like to know in what the Russians are more barbarous than other people. It is true, the lower classes wear their linen outside their trousers; but, then, the Irish peasantry, who are not accounted barbarians, dispense with that luxury altogether. The Russians take no care of their horses: we and the English have the bad taste and brutality to amputate the tails of ours. They like the knout: we prefer the cat-o'-nine-tails, and rejoice in the pillory, the jail, and the gibbet. They have bad laws:

* Guthrie's Grammar.

when they have tinkered them as long as we have ours, they will probably be as good — if they are not worn out in the mending. We are free: the Russians are civil, polite, and good-tempered. We pretend to be religious: they are so. They live on rye bread and salted cabbage: the Spaniard pampers himself with pride and garlic; the Scot on the food of horses; the Irishman on potatoes; the Norwegian on pine bark; and the poor Frenchman on small wine and whatever it pleases the Lord. We have plenty of schools, and do not profit by half of them; the Russian barbarians fill all they have and cry for more — not exactly as we cry for liberty, and as our children cry for Sherman's Lozenges, but in truth, and right-down, serious earnest. The Russian gains information by silent, attentive listening; we get it by asking impertinent questions, and from such blockheads, and worse, as English travellers, stump orators, and political newspaper editors. The civilized Poles and Texans call a pirate a patriot, and shout hallelujah: the uncultivated Russians give him the knout, and pack him off to Siberia.

Still, it is a settled and not to be controverted point, that the Russians are barbarians. They know nothing of architecture, though Moscow is the most gorgeous, and St. Petersburg the most perfect city in Europe. Of course, they are ignorant of the mechanic arts: the traveller in Russia may buy any article of necessity, or convenience, or ornament, made by Russian hands, as good and as cheap as he could in Paris or Birmingham; but this is all imitation. What kind of savages are they, then?

The Russian air does not ring with curses like that of Ireland; the empire has no Peep-o'-day-boys, or Rebeccaites, to illuminate its nights. The

Russians have no aborigines to convert or exterminate; on the contrary, the aborigines (we mean the Circassians and other aboriginal tribes) do their best to exterminate them.

Their laws are, perhaps, not the best, or the best executed, in detail, but they have never, but once or twice, descended to the degradation of Lynch law. There are no Russian mobs of "respectable gentlemen," to grind the gaps out of the sword of justice, because it does not cut quick and fast enough for them.

The Russian Jehovah is not a Moloch; the Russians have not even an Inquisition, nor do they cut each other's throats about religion. The Russian senators do not spit in each other's faces in the senate chamber; nor are the members of their governments ever murdered or mangled with pistols and Bowie knives in their seats.

CHAPTER XI.

THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS I. — THE CHOLERA-MUTINIES. — LETTER FROM DR. BAIRD.

During the late war with Great Britain, the mothers of Canada abandoned their hereditary bugaboos, and reduced their froward children to submission with the mystic word Yankee. Satan's name would not have scared them more. It chanced that an American gentleman, travelling from Little York to Montreal, stopped at a road-side inn, to refresh himself. He was shown into the best room, whence he heard a terrible outcry in the kitchen among the children; and, going to the door to ascertain the cause, he heard the landlady admonish them to be still, as they valued their lives and their souls' salvation, for there was a Yankee in the parlor! — when all was hush, but the hissing of the bacon and eggs in the frying-pan.

Much amused by what he had heard, our traveller left the door slightly ajar; but all continued still. The children had *absquatulated*. Presently a tiny face was seen at the parlor window, and soon after, a child entered the kitchen, screaming at the top of his voice, "It's no use to talk to me, mother — I'm not to be had. It's not a Yankee; for I've looked into the window, and it's a gentleman!"

Gentle or ungentle reader, if you have read the preceding pages of this little volume, looking for the monstrous autocrat, despot, tyrant, oppressor, or what not that is evil,—the Nicholas who has frighted

all Christendom from its propriety, — we hope you have seen at least enough of him to convince you that, like the Yankee, and a certain gentleman whose name is offensive, the Russian emperor is not so black as he has been painted. Unless you are a Pole, we think you will acknowledge that such is the case.

Nicholas I., son of the Emperor Paul, was born July 6, 1796, and ascended the Russian throne December 1, 1825. He was crowned at Moscow, September 3, 1826, and at Warsaw, May 24, 1829.

He was married to the Empress Alexandra Feodorowna, July 13, 1817. She was formerly Frederica Louisa Charlotte Wilhelmine, daughter of the late William III., King of Prussia. They have seven children: —

1. Alexander, Czarewitsch and Hereditary Grand Duke; born April 29, 1818; affianced December 18, 1840, to the Princess Maximilienne Wilhelmine Augusta Sophia Maria, born August 8, 1824, daughter of the Grand Duke Louis II., of Hesse.

2. Maria; born August 18, 1819, and married July 14, 1839, to Duke Maximilian Joseph Eugene Augustus Napoleon, of Leichtenberg, Prince of Eichstadt, who was born October 2, 1817. They live in St. Petersburg.

3. Grand Duchess Olga; born September 11, 1822.

4. Grand Duchess Alexandra; born June 24, 1825.

5. Grand Duke Constantine; born September 21, 1827.

6. Grand Duke Nicholas; born August 8, 1831.

7. Grand Duke Michael; born October 25, 1832.

Brothers and sisters: —

1. The reigning Grand Duchess of Saxe Weimar, Maria.

2. The Queen of the Netherlands, Anna, born 1795.

3. The Grand Duke Michael, born February 8, 1798; married February 19, 1824, to the Grand Duchess Helena Paulowna, formerly Frederica Charlotte Maria, daughter of Prince Paul of Wurtemberg, niece of the king, born January 19, 1807, and embraced the Greek ritual December 17, 1823. They have three daughters, Maria, Elizabeth, and Catherine.

The most conspicuous points in the character of Nicholas I., as a sovereign, are unquestionably his iron energy, that shrinks from no responsibility, and spares no effort; his untiring industry; and his unflinching moral and physical courage. A stronger proof than he gave of all three of these qualities when he mounted a throne on the brink of an upheaving volcano, in the midst of a rebellion, which he crushed at once beneath his armed heel, has seldom, if ever, been given by a crowned head. How easily, had he faltered in the slightest degree, might he have been hurled from the throne into the grave! He has been censured for rashness, for throwing himself, unarmed, into the midst of a furious mob, whose appetite for blood had just been whetted by that of General Miloradovitsch; but it was an occasion that justified, nay, required, what would have otherwise been fool-hardihood. It was the crisis of his destiny, the moment that stamped his character — that was to make him the scoff, or the admiration, of his subjects; it was, in short, his bridge of Arcola, his passage of the Rubicon. His determined perseverance in trampling out the smouldering embers of that rebellion probably preserved the throne of Russia to him, and him to the throne of Russia; for, had the Polish insurrection of

1830–31 broken out simultaneously in both countries, who shall say what the result might have been?

The second time the peculiar energies of Nicholas, as well as the filial affection of his people, were put to the test, was in the year 1832, in the time of the cholera, when the Ssadowaja (Garden Street) witnessed the first and only *barricade* ever thrown up by the populace during the existence of young St. Petersburg. It was at the end of the Ssadowaja, just where it enters the spacious area of the Haymarket. The epidemic was raging; and the lower orders, who make a daily exchange of the Haymarket, had gotten it into their sagacious heads that the disease was not sent by God, but generated and continued, by the medical faculty, by poison. We are not aware what motives they assigned to the doctors, other than the undeniable fact, that it was their interest that people should be sick; or whether they had any color for their conjecture; but it is certain that, after a long discontent and sullen rage, they rose in open insurrection against the authorities. Old men, with hoary hair and gray beards, scoured riotously and desperately through the streets, stopped the cholera carriages, and compelled the patients they were conveying to the hospitals to alight, or, if they were unable, dragged them out. They unharnessed the horses, and shattered the vehicles into pieces, which they carried to the Foutanka canal, and threw them into the water. Then, to prevent the interference of the police, they barricaded all the avenues to the Haymarket with hay-carts, the end of the Ssadowaja in particular. This they blocked with a pile of carts as high as the houses, behind which several thousand rioters bivouacked

for the night, determined to take as summary vengeance on the doctors, in the morning, as they had already done on the sick carts.

In the morning, they actually did storm the great cholera hospital near the Haymarket, and turned all the patients into the street, with the charitable view of delivering them from their supposed tormentors. One of the most eminent German physicians was first flung out of a window, and then torn to pieces by the madmen below. At this moment, their fury was arrested by the words, "*Na kalenje! na kalenje!*" (To your knees!) pronounced by a voice of thunder; and they knelt, as one man, penitent, sobbing, and praying.

Information of what was passing had been sent to the emperor at Czarskoe Sselo, and he had driven, in his *droska*, unattended by a single soldier, to the Haymarket, where the barricades vanished at his glance. There, he stood up in his droska, and tamed the multitude with two words, and then proceeded to the church situated on the edge of the Haymarket. After crossing himself and praying, he addressed a few words to the mob, admonishing them to pay due reverence to God and the church, and commanding them to implore the Almighty's forgiveness for the sin they had committed, and to beseech him, in his mercy, to remove the plague from the city. While he was speaking, the ringleaders were apprehended and taken away, by the police, without any resistance on the part of the multitude.*

A like magnanimous daring carried the emperor into the ranks of the soldier peasants, during the cholera mutiny. The heads of the officers were

* Kohl.

already rolling down the steps of the barracks, when he made his appearance — and how? — with horse, foot, and artillery? Alone with Count Orloff, in his travelling carriage. "Soldiers!" cried he, stepping out, "you have committed the blackest crimes — instant submission and acknowledgment of your guilt alone shall save you." Down dropped the muskets, and prostrate fell the men. "Now that you are once more my subjects," he continued, "I forgive you; but only on one condition — that you at once name the men who have misled you." He was obeyed; the fearful mutiny was quelled, and its instigators set out on their travels for Siberia.

The man who can do these things cannot be all evil, were he the essential oil and double-distilled concentration of despotism.

That this high courage and energy is not divorced from the softer feelings, in the breast of the man who writes himself "autocrat of all the Russias," we might assume from the following statement, which we make on the authority of the editor of the London Quarterly for March, 1841, who speaks from his own knowledge and experience. "While we are on the road," says he, "let us also say that Nicholas is the most galloping personage who ever wore the crown of the czars. No distance stays him; at St. Petersburg to-day, at Astrakhan in a week. He flies by night and by day, at railway pace, always in his simple caleche, and trusting Cæsar's fortunes to the conduct of his wild (though capital) coachmen. In the tens of thousands of miles he has thus travelled, continually changing drivers, — and many of these peasants who do not mount a carriage-box twice in the year, — his majesty has, we believe, never met with

more than one serious overturn. The vigor and bodily endurance he has occasionally manifested, are quite wonderful. When commanding the army against Turkey, and already beyond his own territories, the news of the last illness of the empress mother arrived. To Petersburg he went, without a halt, though his carriage fell to pieces by the way, and much of the journey was performed in carts or tilegas. He attained his object, however, and secured the last embrace and dying benediction of his mother! This anecdote must have its weight with domestic Englishmen.* Nor will its value be impaired if we follow the imperial footsteps to the German baths, and there witness (as some of our friends did last year) the simple manners of 'M. and Madame Romanoff,' teaching, by example, to their children, and offering, in their social circle, a presage that the virtues which adorn the court of Nicholas and his amiable consort will be continued in that of their successors."

Most writers complain bitterly of the frequent infliction of the lash on the lower orders of society in Russia. Speaking of this, the above-quoted writer says, "As to blows, for aught that we could see or hear, they have gone out of fashion. Though accompanied by Russian authorities, who had the power in their hands, and that over a very wide range of the empire, we never saw but two blows given — the one by a common soldier to a refractory peasant, the other by an inflated little country mayor to a driver who had contradicted him." We beg to impress the fact on some of our prejudiced readers, that the Russians of this day are *not* cudgelled. Following up the mandates of

* And with domestic Americans, too.

Alexander, Nicholas has all but extirpated summary punishments on the road. The postilions are now declared to be imperial sub-officers, and no one can strike them with impunity.

While we are on the subject of roads, we may mention that a commodious inn (commodious in every thing but the absence of beds) has been established, at the emperor's expense, at every station between Moscow and St. Petersburg. They are all on a uniform plan, and all kept by Germans. A leather-covered sofa is the lodging assigned to the traveller; his servant avails himself of the softest spot on the floor. In time, perhaps, the servant may aspire to the sofa, while his master shall have been promoted to straw or feathers.

Many other instances might be cited of the strength of the emperor's kindred feelings: we shall be content with the following: — When his first grandchild was born, he passed the night on his knees, in prayer for the safety of his best-beloved daughter Maria, grand duchess of Leichtenberg; and his first care, when informed that her labor was happily terminated, was to provide gifts suitable for the mother and child.

"The high moral character of the emperor has been the pride of the Russian world," says a lady writer, whom we have already quoted with commendation. The wife usually takes the tone of her character from her husband; the court always adopts that of the sovereign, and, accordingly, "the present court of Russia," says the Polytechnic Journal, 'is irreproachable in regard to morals and manners. The czar, indeed, carries his ideas of propriety to an extreme almost puritanical; and, being an emperor, and a very handsome man, it is not a little singular that he should be, as he really

is, an example of conjugal fidelity. One evening at a court ball, the Princess ——, a lady who had taken infinite pains to make herself agreeable to his majesty, was chosen as his partner. The emperor, seeing Count Orloff opposite to him, said to the princess, 'What an exceedingly handsome man the count is!' 'Sire,' observed the lady, 'no gentleman can appear handsome next to your majesty.' The emperor affected to be offended at this compliment; and then, raising his voice, he said, in a very low tone, 'Me, madam!—you jest! I am only handsome in the eyes of my wife!' The poor princess was confounded at this rebuff, especially when she observed the malicious smiles of the surrounding group, by whom it had been heard.

"The court of St. Petersburg is composed of two distinct parties; the one superior in rank, the other superior in talent. The former is headed by the empress and her household; the latter by the grand duchess Helena and her ladies of honor."

The empress is a most exemplary wife and mother; but is fonder of dancing than is at all good for her health. Her physicians forbade late hours; but the emperor hit upon an expedient to gratify her taste without violating their orders. He commanded that the court balls should be opened at 8 P. M., instead of at midnight, as previously. This, of course, involved the sacrifice of other evening amusements.

At St. Petersburg, where the emperor can be seen every day, by every body, he is the czar, a very great and very good man, considerably upwards of six feet high;—nothing more. At Moscow, he moves surrounded with the prestige of novelty, and there he is all but idolized. "Our

little father!" cry the upward-gazing mujiks, too wrapt in admiration to make way for him.

"Come now, do make a little room for me," says the emperor, with his hand still raised to his hat. "Do, brother, stand out of the way."

The palace is surrounded by a crowd from morning till night. There are no guards, to hinder them from looking at their earthly father and his family. If one of them happens to show himself at a window, off goes every hat, as if it were Nicholas himself. One day, as the empress was sitting at the window, the emperor came behind her, passed his arm round her neck, and kissed her. "No one unacquainted with the Russian character can conceive the effect of this simple act. The general shout that came from the lips of the people arose from the holiest depths of their hearts, and I venture to say that there was no man of that vast concourse who would not have laid down his life for the czar, and no woman who would not have urged her son, or husband, to do so." *

The grand duchess Helena's recreation is the study of science and literature. She is one of the most intellectual women of the age, and not less distinguished for her talents than for her beauty. A liberal patroness is she of literature and the fine arts, and receives literary parties two or three evenings in the week. A gentleman, who had received a general invitation, arriving rather too early, was shown into the library, where he amused himself by looking over the books. While thus employed, the grand duchess entered, and desired that, as it was her wish to vary the subjects of conversation at her *soirées*,

* Ritchie.

he would direct it a little more to history, and a little less to poetry. "If I had seen this library sooner," he replied, "I should have seen that history is your imperial highness's favorite study, and known your taste; but I naturally fancied that poetry was the most attractive branch of literature to a lady." "Then my library has informed you of your error?" "It has — the books most within reach, and which appear to have been most used, show who your highness's favorite authors are. I see here the works of Robertson, Karamsin, Thierry, Barante, and Von Muller. The poets, on the contrary, are on the upper shelves; they glitter in bindings of untarnished brilliancy, and the order in which they are arranged implies that they are not often disturbed. From all this, I infer that your highness reads a great deal of history, and not much of poetry." The grand duchess admitted that the inference was correct.*

"Conspicuous among the group of officers, with orders, stars, and cordons glittering around them," says the Baltic lady, speaking of the new year's festival, at the Winter Palace, "was the Grand Duke Michael, the emperor's brother, a magnificent figure, with immense length of limb, and a peculiar curve of outline, which renders him recognizable at any distance among hundreds in the same uniform, — who was seen pacing slowly backwards and forwards on the marble-like *parquête*, and bending fierce looks on the soldiery." This prince does not seem to have found favor with the fair writer, or rather, her admiration of the emperor is so great that she has little, if any, to spare for any body else. She describes the grand duke as having "a

* Polytechnic Journal.

fine bravo style of face, with somewhat ferocious moustaches — a terrestial likeness of the emperor; earthly passions written on his high brow; but none of Jove's thunderbolts.

The grand duke is a strict disciplinarian.

The *naslednik heritier*, or heir apparent, Alexander, "the slender prototype of his father's grand proportions," is thus described: "He inherits his father's majestic person, and somewhat of the regularity of his face; but with the utter absence of the emperor's unsympathizing grandeur. On the contrary, the son has a face of much sentiment and feeling; the lips full, the eyelids pensive; more of kindness than of character in his expression.

"The grand duchess Olga, second daughter of the emperor, was (in 1840) a most beautiful girl of sixteen, just restored from a dangerous fever, the traces of which were visible in the exquisite delicacy of her complexion, and in the light, girl-like cap worn to hide the absence of those tresses which had been sacrificed to her illness."

On the same occasion, "the emperor — the plainest-dressed, but the most magnificent figure present, wanted no outward token to declare the dignity of his presence. He passed slowly on, accommodating his manly movements to the short, feeble steps of the empress, who, arrayed in a blaze of jewels, dragged a heavy train of orange-colored velvet after her, and seemed hardly able to support her own weight."

Great minds can seldom accustom themselves to etiquette and ceremony. Napoleon threw off ceremony in the camp, and was adored by his soldiers. He wanted etiquette in his court, but gained nothing by it. No truly great man ever cared for trifles. Nicholas, from all accounts, ap-

pears to disregard mere appearances, and to be the most homely (in the Scotch sense of the word) personage in all Russia. He habitually commands at parades. Enveloped in dust, the cavalcade dashes along like a mighty thunder-cloud, from which flash forth the lightnings of arms and of orders. The soldiers present arms, while all the spectators uncover at the approach of majesty. "Good day, my lads!" cries the emperor. "We thank your majesty," is the reply that bursts like thunder from every mouth.

"But it is by no means necessary to go to the parade to see the emperor. He appears so often on foot, on horseback, in droska, or in one-horse sledge, that he is precisely the person whom you are sure to meet oftenest in the streets of St. Petersburg. There is not a monarch in the world whom so many occupations lead into the streets, or who is pressed by such a prodigious mass of business — daily inspections of the hundred institutions of his capital; visits to the offices of the different ministers; reviews; participation in popular amusements prescribed by ancient custom; personal directions for building public edifices; visits to high personages, and even to sick old ladies, and a hundred other matters.

"On all ordinary occasions, wherever the emperor makes his appearance, it is in the plainest and most unostentatious manner in the world. Natives of the West, as well as Orientals, are surprised to see how much greatness, power, and majesty, can submit to be drawn along the streets in a single sledge, by a single horse. On his journeys in the interior of the empire, the sovereign is frequently seen in a common, rudely-made tilega, such as is used by the serfs; and one can scarcely conceive how it

happens that he is not afraid of diminishing his consequence. I am convinced that the pettiest prince in Germany would make some scruple, if he were asked to step into a small, low droska, such as the emperor of all the Russias is seen in every day. One is the more puzzled to account for this, because, at other times, the court of Russia displays a splendor and magnificence not surpassed by any.*

"At St. Petersburg, Nicholas has often gone home, when it rained, in a hired droska. Once, when he happened to have no money about him, and the driver did not know his quality, the man kept his cloak till his fare was sent to him."†

On Easter morning, it is the custom of the Russians to salute each other with, "Christ is risen." One Easter, on coming out of the palace, he gave the customary salutation to the sentry at the door.

"Indeed, your majesty, he is not," replied the soldier.

"Why! — What! — I said, 'Christ is risen.'"

"And I replied, 'He is not.'"

"Who, and what, in God's name, are you, then?"

"A Jew, by your majesty's favor."

In no one thing has the emperor shown himself to more advantage than in the encouragement he has given to learning. Not to speak of improvements on former institutions, which it would be impossible to trace, let us simply say, that almost all the vast plans of national education, devised by Alexander, were left by him for Nicholas to accomplish.

The University of Kieff, or St. Wladimir, was founded and endowed by him, in 1834, to supply

* Kohl. † Ritchie.

the place of that of Wilna, which he found it necessary to suppress after the insurrection of 1830–31. In 1838, it had eighty-eight professors and subordinate functionaries, and two hundred and three pupils. In 1835, it had a revenue of 250,000 rubles. There are four governments under the jurisdiction of this university, in which there were one lyceum, seven gymnasiums, and twenty-five free schools, with four hundred and sixty pupils. Fifty pupils are educated at the public expense at this institution, of whom twenty-six are intended for teachers. The remaining twenty-four are instructed in the law, to enable them to fill judicial and other offices in the old Polish provinces.

The university district of White Russia had, in 1835, no university; but it had twelve gymnasiums and a high school. We have no accounts of it since that period.

The university of Helsingfors, in Finland, was founded, in 1829, in the place of that of Abo, destroyed by fire the same year. It had forty professors, and four hundred and twenty-five pupils, in 1832. There are nearly four hundred establishments of learning in Finland.

There was a lyceum in Odessa in 1835, and five gymnasiums and thirteen high schools within its jurisdiction.

In the Transcaucasian district, there is a gymnasium, a free school, and twelve central schools.

There are also a great many schools founded for particular purposes, such as military schools in St. Petersburg, Moscow, and other places, especial schools for the nobility, medical and theological schools, &c.

These last are intended for the children of the clergy. We have no means of ascertaining which

of these are old, and which are new; but there is a very great improvement throughout, as will be seen by the following table, which only embraces the first ten years of the present emperor's reign: —

	1804.		1824.		1838.	
	Schools	Pupils.	Schools	Pupils.	Schools	Pupils.
Schools under the Minister of Pub. Instruction,	499	33,481	1,411	69,629	1,681	85,707
Military Schools, . . .	15	29,000	117	102,295	152	179,580
Ecclesiastical do. . . .	100	15,000	544	50,000	601	67,424
Special do. . . .	13	31,775	46	41,300	1,522	127,864
Total, ...	627	109,256	2,118	263,224	3,956	460,575

Of the 460,575 schools existing in 1825, 2841 were maintained at the expense of the government. Not less than 252,311 of the pupils were educated gratuitously, and the total school expenses incurred that year by the government amounted to 28,734,141 rubles. If we add to the pupils at school those educated at home, it will be admitted that education has made very rapid progress in Russia.

The board of education at St. Petersburg have recently established eleven hundred and fifty-nine schools in Poland. It has been asserted, again and again, that the emperor is inimical to education in Poland. On the contrary, on the 25th of August, he addressed the following missive to Field-marshal Prince Theodorowitsch: —

"Prince John Theodorowitsch: Considering that there is a great want of the uccessary aids to instruction (viz., books) in the district of the University of Warsaw, I have thought fit to present to it a collection, expressly selected, of about thirteen thousand volumes. The minister of public instruction is to give directions respecting the con-

veyance of these books for the learned and scientific institutions in the district under the Warsaw University, in concert with the university library. May this present serve as a new proof of my care for the prosperity and education of the youth of Poland, and may it excite in them the most zealous endeavors to answer my paternal intentions."

Next in importance to the university at St. Petersburg is the "Pedagogic Institution," designed solely for the instruction of teachers of all kinds, masters of popular, circular, and gymnasial schools, and professors for the universities. It was founded in 1832, to suppress or reform the system of instruction in Poland, and to take it out of the hands of the Jesuits. Boys of twelve are admitted, and all who apply are taken; but for the details of this institution, and of education generally, in Russia, we must refer the reader to "Russia and the Russians," by J. G. Kohl, where he will find all the information he needs.

Those who, deriving their impressions from Polish fugitives, take the emperor of Russia for a man of harsh and repulsive nature, are grossly deceived. We could fill a large book with anecdotes of his benevolence. He gave a poor tradesman a pension of two thousand rubles, and an order, for saving the lives of persons endangered at the conflagration of the Katscheli theatre, where three hundred persons perished.

At Helsingfors, the emperor may be said to have played the part of a benignant Providence, in ordaining the happiness of the poor, but passing fair, Baroness K., and a meritorious, but equally poverty-stricken Russian officer. Moved by the faithful love and fading charms of the baroness, the emperor gave her a pension, to make the course of true

love run smooth. The experiment was as successful as the one tried by the mock doctor in "*Le Médécin Malgré Lui.*"

The peasants of Russia owe it to Nicholas that their lords are obliged to provide for them in distress. He also ordered that vagrants and beggars should be set to work. Even the Siberian authorities are obliged to prevent any individual committed to them from suffering want. Similar charity has been extended to Poland.

At one time, the emperor sent a very handsome contribution to the "distressed Poles in England." The distressed Poles sent it back again. We recollect but one like instance of distressed magnanimity. It was when relief was sent from Boston to the sufferers by a fire in the south, with a request that it might be distributed "without regard to color." The sufferers sent the almsgiving back, with, "Thank you! — we don't want any of your advice."

Of the emperor's liberal encouragement of the fine arts, of the talents he has drawn from obscurity, the number of artists he has sent to be educated in Italy, the voyages of discovery he has fitted forth, a great deal more might be said than we deem at all necessary. We have not the means of ascertaining the number of times the imperial hand has been put forth in aid of struggling merit and public improvement — we can only judge of his general course by its results. We do not say that Russia has advanced as much under his reign as it did in that of Peter the Great — such sudden changes can occur but seldom in the history of a people; but we may say that as much has been effected for the general good, in the twenty years of Nicholas's rule, as from the commencement of the reign of

Catherine to the end of that of Alexander. Every writer, even the most prejudiced, bears us out in the supposition.

It is, we believe, the nature of mankind to take the part of the wronged; it is ours, at least. The excess of the abuse lavished on Nicholas Romanoff first induced us to inquire how far it was deserved. The result has been the preceding pages.

We have had the emperor's portrait taken, and placed where it is seen and admired by thousands; just as we should strive to make George Washington, or Benjamin Franklin, or any other great benefactor to the human race, conspicuous. It is the universal mistake to take the thousands for the people, instead of the millions. We find the Emperor Nicholas cursed by the *soi-disant* Polish nation, the small and arrogant aristocracy; and unpopular with the advocates of conservatism every where; while the millions of Poland and Russia, the laboring classes, the *people*, bless his name, with one voice.

We have not altogether relied upon our own judgment, either. We have induced others to think, to inquire, and to examine, and the result has invariably been the same. Any one who will take the pains to think, and to compare the evidence for and against Russia and its emperor, must come to the conclusion we have reached.

We have made inquiry, too, of our countrymen who have voyaged in Russia — the fruit of our inquiries may be found scattered over the preceding pages. It may not be amiss, in this connection, to quote a letter from our esteemed friend and fellow-countryman, the Rev. R. Baird, D. D., which was addressed to us in answer to our inquiries respecting the emperor of Russia. We present the

views of Dr. Baird with peculiar pleasure and satisfaction, inasmuch as they are the result of his personal observations during his residence in Russia. Such authority cannot be questioned.

"NEW YORK, *September* 19, 1844.

"My Dear Sir:

"In answer to your inquiries concerning the Emperor Nicholas, I would say, —

"1. He is an able, sagacious, laborious, and patriotic prince and ruler. He devotes himself most assiduously to the proper task of a ruler, and looks after every thing as far as it is possible for a mortal man to do so. It is certainly no easy task to govern, as an absolute sovereign, 62,000,000 of people, most of whom are imperfectly civilized, speaking more than 30 languages and dialects, and scattered over a territory more than four times and a half greater than the settled portions of the territory claimed by the United States. In such a government, and such a variety of nations and languages, and in a country of such vast extent, there must necessarily be a great deal committed to subordinates; and as these are proverbially dishonest, and often extremely incapable, there must necessarily be a great deal of mal-administration. Flagrant injustice is often, very often perpetrated, in cases which never reach the emperor's ears, or, if they do, he knows not what to do, in order to attain what would be strict justice.

"2. Good men of every nation whom I have known in Russia — English, Americans, Swiss, Germans, as well as natives, have agreed in this opinion respecting the emperor, viz., that his aim and effort is to do what is right so far as he knows, and that he has at heart (perhaps more than any

other man in Russia) *the best interests of the empire.* He may do many things which are wrong, many which are perhaps unwise, even some which are unjust; but it is from want of knowledge, which indeed it would be expecting more than ought to be expected from any man, to suppose him, in every case, to possess. By all disinterested and well-informed men, such as intelligent and good foreigners of every nation, he is believed to be the best sovereign — I mean the most wise, efficient, and capable sovereign — Russia has ever had.

"3. Facts prove that he is more desirous of advancing the civilization of his empire than its extension by military conquests. He has done almost nothing at all to enlarge his dominions; whilst he has done, and is doing, much to promote education, the useful arts, and every good thing, among his people. In this he has far exceeded all his predecessors, unless we except Peter the Great; and I know not that he ought to be excepted.

"4. The emperor may be deceived and misled by those around him, and doubtless often is; but he is governed by no favorite — which can be asserted of none of his predecessors, and of few absolute monarchs that have ever lived.

"5. As to his moral character, it would be hard to find a kinder father, or a more affectionate husband. And, without claiming for him a true moral character, in the sense in which we use the expression, it may nevertheless be asserted that he is a far more exemplary man, in his words and actions, than most public men in this or any other country.

"6. There is, probably, no monarch in the world who exceeds him in strength of mind or in readiness of comprehension; though in acquired knowledge, he is inferior to the kings of France, Prussia,

and Holland; for he came early to his throne, and has had little leisure for reading since.

"I have the honor to be,

"Yours most truly,

'R. BAIRD."

We have little left but to endeavor to communicate some *personal* idea of the emperor, which we shall best accomplish by citing the impression of the lady letter-writer from the Baltic. What she relates took place at a masquerade at the Great Theatre, at St. Petersburg.

"I was now becoming impatient for a nearer view of that awful personage whom all united in describing as *le plus bel homme qu'un puisse s'imaginer*,* and who, whether seen from the diminished heights of the *Salle Blanche*, or dashing along, his white feather streaming, and muffled in his military cloak, in his solitary sledge with one horse, or striding with powerful steps, utterly unattended, in the dusk of the early evening, the whole length of the Nevski, wore a halo of majesty it was impossible to overlook. An opportunity for a closer view soon presented itself.

"The heritier, the grand duke Michael, the duke de Leichtenberg, were all seen passing, in turn, each led about by a whispering mask. "*Mais où est donc l'empereur?*" "*Il n'y est pas encore*," † was the answer; but scarce was this uttered when a towering plume moved, the crowd fell back, and, enframed in a vacant space, stood a figure, to which there is no second in Russia, if in the world itself; a figure of the grandest beauty, expression, dimension, and carriage, uniting all the majesties and

* The handsomest man imaginable.

† "But where, then, is the emperor?" "Not here yet."

graces of the heathen gods (the little god of love alone perhaps excepted) on his ample and symmetrical proportions. Had this nobility of person belonged to a simple *mujik*, instead of to the autocrat of all the Russias, the admiration could not have been less, nor scarcely the feeling of moral awe. It was not the monarch who was so magnificent a man, but the man who was so truly imperial. He stood awhile silent and haughty, as if disdaining all the vanity and levity around him; when, perceiving my two distinguished companions, he strode grandly towards our box, and, just lifting his plumes, with a lofty bow, stooped and kissed the princess's hand, (who in return imprinted a kiss on the imperial cheek,) and then, leaning against the pillar, remained in conversation.

"The person of the emperor is that of a colossal man in the full prime of life and health; forty-two years of age, about six feet two inches high, and well filled out, without any approach to corpulency; the head magnificently carried, a splendid breadth of shoulder and chest, great length and symmetry of limb, with finely-formed hands and feet. His face is strictly Grecian — forehead and nose in one grand line, the eyes finely lined, large, open, and blue, with a calmness, a coldness, a freezing dignity, which can equally quell an insurrection, daunt an assassin, or paralyze a petitioner; the mouth regular, the teeth fine, chin prominent, with dark moustache, and small whisker; but not a sympathy on his face. His mouth sometimes smiled, his eyes never. There was that in his look which no monarch's subject could meet. His eye seeks every one's gaze; but none can confront his.

"After a few minutes, his curiosity, the unfailing attribute of a crowned head, dictated the words,

"Kto eta?" "Who is that?" — and being satisfied, (for he remarks every strange face that enters his capital,) he continued, alternately in Russian and French, commenting upon the scene.

"*Personne ne m'intrigue ce soir*," he said. "*Je ne sais pas ce que j'ai fait pour perdre ma reputation; mais on ne veut pas de mot.*" * As he stood, various masks approached; but, either from excess of embarrassment, or from lack of wit, after rousing the lion, found nothing to say. At length a couple approached, and stood irresolute, each motioning the other to speak. "*Donnez moi la main*," † said a low, trembling voice. He stretched out his noble hand: "*Et voila l'autre pour vous*," ‡ said he, extending the other to her companion; and on they passed, probably never to forget the mighty hand that had clasped theirs. Meanwhile, the emperor carefully scanned the crowd, and owned himself in search of a mask who had attacked him on his first entrance. "*Quand je l'aurai trouvé, je vous l'aménerai;*" ‖ and so saying, he left us.

"I watched his figure, which, as if surrounded with an invisible barrier, bore a vacant space about it through the thickest of the press. In a short time, a little mask stepped boldly up to him, and, reaching upwards to her utmost stretch, hung herself fearlessly upon that arm which wields the destinies of the seventh part of the known world. He threw a look to our box, as if to say, "I have found her," and off they went together. In five minutes they passed again, and his majesty made some effort to draw her to our box; but the little black

* "Nobody tries to puzzle me this evening. I don't know what I have done to lose my reputation; but nobody wants any thing to do with me."

† "Give me your hand." ‡ "And there's the other for you."

‖ "When I have found her, I will bring her to you."

sylph resisted, pulling in a contrary direction at his lofty shoulder with all her strength ; on which he called out, "*Elle ne veut pas que je m'approche de vous ; elle dit que je suis trop mauvaise société.*" * Upon the second round, however, he succeeded in bringing his rebellious subject nearer ; when, recognizing his manœuvre, she plucked her arm away, gave him a smart slap on the wrist, and saying, "*Va t'en ; je ne veux plus de toi*," † ran into the crowd. The emperor, they assured me, was in an unusual good temper this evening. I think there can be no doubt of it.

"When a mask has pleased his fancy, the emperor never rests till he has discovered her real name, and sets his secret police upon the scent with as much zest as after a political offender. The mask whom we had observed, at the theatre, on such familiar terms with him, was recognized, a few days after, to be a little *modiste* from the most fashionable milliner's in St. Petersburg, whose frequent errands to the empress had furnished her with a few graphic touches of the imperial character.

"In a country where, unfortunately, neither promotion, nor justice, nor redress, generally speaking, is to be had without interest, this means of directly reaching the imperial ear, or that of the chief officers of the state, (of presenting a living anonymous letter — of dropping information which they are bound, if not to favor, at all events not to take amiss,) is immensely resorted to. The emperor has been known to remonstrate loudly at being annoyed with business or complaint in these few hours of relaxation ; but this is rather to the awkwardness

* "She won't let me come near you ; she says I am too bad company."

† "Go along — I want no more of you."

or embarrassment of the poor petitioner, who, feeling the welfare of a father or brother, or of a whole family, hanging upon the force of her slender words; addressing, for the first time, the awful individual whose word makes and unmakes a law; and ashamed, perhaps, of the disguise to which she has been compelled; can neither command the calmness nor adroitness necessary to smooth the way for her blunter petition.

"On the other hand, where the complainant, by a happy address or a well-timed flattery, has disposed the imperial palate for the reception of more sober truths, her case has been listened to with humanity, and met by redress. More than once the emperor was observed engaged with a mask in conversation, who had evidently digressed from levity into a more serious strain, and was overheard to thank the mask for her information, and promise the subject his attention.

"In consequence of the taste that his majesty has of late years evinced for this species of amusement, the masked balls have greatly increased in number and resort. Previous to being incapacitated by bad health, the empress also equally partook of them; and, it is said, greatly enjoyed being addressed with the same familiarity as any of her subjects. Her majesty has even been the cause of severe terrors to many an unfortunate individual, who, new to the scene, or not recognizing by filial instinct the maternal arm which pressed his, has either himself indulged in too much license of speech, or given the imperial mask to understand that he found hers devoid of interest."

The Emperor Nicholas is doing more to encourage agriculture, commerce, and the arts, than

any other living monarch. Amid the pressing and weighty cares of government, he is introducing and fostering, by his purse and the presence of his person, every department of science and mechanism. We have it on the best authority, that he neglects no valuable invention, or fails to encourage and sustain whatever may be useful to the improvement and well-being of his people. The able and intelligent editor of the New York Express, E. Brooks, Esq., thus speaks of a Fair he recently attended at Moscow: —

"From the Treasury I was favored with a visit to a grand exhibition of *all the varieties of goods manufactured in Russia;* and no ways prejudiced as I am in favor of the country I am in, but heartily disliking it altogether, I must say, that I have never seen at home an exhibition half as creditable. I did not expect to see any thing in Moscow that would eclipse the annual exhibition of the American Institute in New York; nor should I, if the government at Washington or at Albany afforded half the favors to domestic skill and industry that are afforded by the government here. Such an exhibition in Moscow is an occurrence of but once in three years; and there is an exhibition in St. Petersburg as often, and in some other of the cities of the empire, — making an annual exhibition.

"To enumerate all the articles exhibited, would be like enumerating all the trophies of the Treasury. There are few kinds of goods not manufactured here, and few, the workmanship of which would not be creditable to any country. A building of three times the space of Niblo's Garden was occupied with the various kinds of workmanship, all neatly and tastefully arranged. There was no crowd or bustle, and the avenues were so arranged,

that a person entering at one end of the building, was obliged not only to make his egress from another, but to see every thing that he passed. The work in gold, and silver, and platina, was most beautiful. The cloths were of a superior order, and even the cotton goods were well, strongly, and often beautifully made. In much of the fancy-work exhibited, both in dress and in more substantial materials, the manufactures seemed to exhibit a capacity equal to the nations regarded as very far in advance of the one we were in. The musical instruments, too, were equal to the best of those of Germany, and as much may be said of almost every kind of work presented for public favor. I had seen few such specimens of improvement out of the fair as within; and though it was obvious the very best of every thing was here, and arranged in the best manner to make an imposing display, yet every piece of goods, and every article of ware presented, would pass the severest ordeal of inspection."

The emperor has favored our countrymen with various responsible and important posts of honor and emolument. A son of New Hampshire has been created a count, and is an admiral in the Russian navy; while other equally exalted as well as subordinate offices are held by Americans. Of the great railroad, now being completed from St. Petersburg to Moscow, Mr. Whistler (an able engineer from Connecticut) has the entire supervision, and in this magnificent enterprise there are also many natives of America. Other roads are in contemplation, which are to be constructed as soon as that road is finished. The emperor has also largely patronized our mechanics by building war

steamers and purchasing millions of dollars' worth of our steam engines, &c. &c.

The delightful duty of defending the "Autocrat of all the Russias" has been impartially but imperfectly executed; and should it be the means of changing the views of our countrymen in relation to his character and government, our labor will be abundantly rewarded. With the memorable words of Constantine, (and we know the impartial reader will unite with us,) we desire "that the Most High may watch over the precious health of his Majesty, that He may prolong his days, and that his glory, and the glory of his crown, may be transmitted from generation to generation."

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Hitchcock, David K.

Vindication of Russia and the emperor Nicholas [Nikolaus I., Zar v. Rußland]

Boston 1844

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